



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
August 12-16, 2013

Celebrating justice: 'A long time coming'

[Kamloops Daily News](#)

August 13, 2013

Sylvia Paillard



Hugo Yuen. First Nations drummers from various aboriginal communities gathered to welcome the new Cknucwentn First Nations court in Kamloops on Monday afternoon at the Kamloops Law Courts.

Kamloops Law Courts room 2D is usually a sombre place that few wish to visit — especially those on the wrong side of the law.

But on Monday, it was transformed into a place of hope and celebration when dozens came together to acknowledge the new Cknucwentn First Nations court.

Aboriginal band members and supporters of First Nations justice travelled from the entire region to attend a ceremony honouring everyone involved in bringing the court to Kamloops.

The new form of restorative justice mimics a few other courts recently established elsewhere in Canada.

It was first launched in Kamloops last March and so far 50 First Nations members of all ages have passed through the system.

"It's been a long time coming," Tk'emlups Indian Band councillors Jeannette Jules told a packed courtroom. "There's huge over-representation of First Nations in incarceration. We have to address the root cause."

Linda Thomas, legal counsel at Tk'emlups Indian Band, has been pushing for the program since 2008. It was approved last year by the chief administrative judge of B.C.'s provincial court.

She tearfully accepted the accolades of judges, politicians and advocates who gathered on Monday and delivered a long list of individuals who were also instrumental.

Among them is retired judge Cunliffe Barnett.

Barnett trained nine elders for 12 weeks to deliver a form of justice that is legal yet also addresses the larger context of offences, like homelessness, substance abuse or past trauma inflicted in such places as foster homes or residential schools.

A case will typically see five elders gathered at the table, along with the judge, lawyers and native court workers.

The sentence always includes a healing plan.

Two local provincial court judges — Stella Frame and Chris Cleaveley — will be assigned to the monthly court sessions hear only guilty pleas, not trials.

"Their success is our success," said Frame. "The days I've sat on that court have been the most fulfilling days I've had since becoming a judge."

Spy agency monitored Idle No More, says it did so to protect protesters: CSIS claims it monitored Idle No More events to protect activists

[Vancouver Sun](#)

August 12, 2013

Stephen Spencer Davis



Idle No More protesters demonstrate at the base of the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, Ont., on Jan. 16, disrupting traffic at the country's busiest border crossing. Photograph by: Geoff Robins, The Canadian Press Files, Postmedia News

A federal department and the country's spy agency closely monitored the activities of the aboriginal Idle No More movement in late 2012 and early 2013, with the intelligence agency claiming it was doing so

not over fear of protests getting out of hand, but to protect the activists from potential violence by others.

A series of "weekly situational awareness reports" from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada reveals a rigorous cataloguing of Idle No More's activities.

Each report begins: "This is a weekly report that provides current information and the status of activities that threaten public safety in relation to issues affecting Aboriginal Peoples in Canada."

The reports were produced between December 2012 and February 2013. They contain long lists of the dates and locations of planned Idle No More demonstrations.

Aboriginal Affairs spokeswoman Gen Guibert said the information in the reports was culled from sources including media, social media, Aboriginal Affairs regional offices, and First Nations.

Guibert would not say for whom the reports were meant for or who read them, nor whether they went to the minister of aboriginal affairs or the minister of public safety. She said generally the reports were "shared with a variety of internal and external partners including other federal departments, provincial emergency measures organizations and the Assembly of First Nations.

"The information we gather and share is to support a coordinated response to emergencies and other significant events in First Nations communities."

She said Aboriginal Affairs staff did not send any staff to Idle No More protests, demonstrations or similar events. Viewed together, the reports illustrate Idle No More's rapid growth, as documented by Aboriginal Affairs.

Idle No More was in part an indigenous response to federal government policies and general discontent among the aboriginal population with Canada's treatment of First Nations peoples. Its demonstrations have included marches, flash mobs, and road and railway blockades.

A report from Dec. 21, 2012 - a period when a Northern Ontario chief, Theresa Spence, was staging a prolonged liquids-only protest in Ottawa - stated that there had been "approximately 49" Idle No More protests since Dec. 9. By Feb. 15, 2013, there had been 439 protests.

Between Jan. 12 and 17 alone, the department documented 72 protests, along with their dates and locations.

In some reports, Aboriginal Affairs listed "Idle No More Protests-National" under the heading "To watch over the weekend" near the beginning of each report.

The reports frequently cited the media as a source of information, including updates on Spence's ongoing "hunger" strike, which appeared under a "hot spot summary" section of the reports.

In addition to the reports of Aboriginal Affairs, Canada's Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre, which operates within CSIS, the Canadian spy agency, prepared a threat assessment on Idle No More in January.

The heavily censored document, released to Postmedia News in response to an access-to-information request, contained a section in which a white supremacy website, Stormfront, said Idle No More represented a declaration of war on white people. Stormfront's forum section contained a call for citizens to respond violently, according to the assessment.

The report also said that a group called Canadian Advocates for Charter Equality was planning a bus trip to Ottawa on Feb. 11. Gary McHale, CANACE president, said the event was eventually cancelled.

McHale played an active role in opposing the aboriginal takeover of the Douglas Creek Estates housing development in Caledonia, in southwestern Ontario, from 2006 to 2011. He has been arrested several times.

On its website, ITAC says, as its name suggests, that it provides the federal government with threat assessments, which it describes as analyses "of the intent and capability of terrorists to carry out attacks." It shares threat assessments with first responders, provincial authorities, and members of the private sector, among others.

CSIS spokeswoman Tahera Mufti stressed in emails to Postmedia News that ITAC did not consider Idle No More to be a terrorist threat.

"ITAC does not report on peaceful protest and dissent," Mufti said. "Its mention of Idle No More was based on potential threats to that movement and not that Idle No More represented a threat to Canadian safety and/or Canadian interests."

Chantal Chagnon, an organizer with Idle No More in Calgary, was not surprised to hear that the group has been monitored by CSIS. "Aboriginal people in general have been under CSIS alert since the 80s," Chagnon said.

First Nations Stand Between Canada-China Agreement

[CBC](#)

August 11, 2013

A legal challenge filed in a federal court by the Hupacasath First Nation in B.C. is standing in the way of the Canadian government ratifying a controversial investment treaty with China, says a member of the small B.C. community.

The federal government was swift to sign a Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement with China last September, but it cannot take effect until it has been ratified by both sides.

Brenda Sayers, a member of the Hupacasath First Nations, told CBC News the federal government agreed to "hold off on the ratification until due process took place in court."

The Hupacasath First Nation is located in Port Alberni, B.C., and consists of approximately 300 members across five reserves.

The small First Nations community argued in federal court in June that the federal government is required to consult First Nations under Section 35 of the Constitution Act, which provides constitutional protection to the aboriginal and treaty rights of aboriginal peoples in Canada.

According to Sayers, if the investment treaty is ratified, Chinese investors would have control over major assets such as coal on its 232,000-hectare territory.

The extraction of resources by foreign firms would strip negotiating powers for First Nations, which are involved in the treaty process.

"We are saying that the federal government failed to consult," Sayers said.

But lawyers for the federal government argued that a duty to consult does not apply in this case.

A spokesman for International Trade Minister Ed Fast told CBC News in a written statement, "the FIPA contains the exceptions found in our other treaties that preserve policy flexibility for certain sectors and activities, including rights or preferences provided to aboriginal peoples."

"Furthermore, the Canada-China FIPA, like Canada's other FIPAs, provides a policy carve-out for government measures concerning rights or preferences provided to aboriginal peoples," said Rudy Husny, the spokesman for the minister of international trade.

The investment treaty with China, according to the federal government, "will provide stronger protection for Canadians investing in China, and facilitate the creation of jobs and economic growth here at home."

Since 2006, the Harper government has concluded or brought into force FIPAs with 14 countries, and is actively negotiating with 12 others.

The FIPA with China contains "all of the core substantive obligations that are standard in our other FIPAs," Husny said.

The Opposition New Democrats have opposed the treaty in its current form, saying it contains significant gaps and provides few benefits for Canada. The NDP also deplored that investment treaties need not be debated in Parliament.

Don Davies, the NDP critic for international trade, told CBC News "this government has, once again, refused to consult with and open a dialogue with Canada's First Nations about the potential impact of the FIPA on their rights and communities."

"We know we can sign trade and investment treaties that benefit Canadians, respect our First Nations, and enhance our economy," Davies said in a written statement.

Members of the Hupacasath First Nation in B.C. will rally on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on Sunday to gather support for their court challenge pending a federal court ruling.

Sayers said members of the B.C. community are touring the provinces of Quebec and Ontario to inform Canadians about the consequences of ratifying the investment treaty with China.

A ruling could come as early as the end of August.

Ojibwe youth camp helps restore once-forbidden language

[MinnPost](#)

August 12, 2013

Cynthia Boyd



The Ojibwe Language and Culture Camp will be held at the Round House in Ponemah.

My Norwegian-born grandmother, who arrived on America's shores in 1912, played an outsize role in my childhood telling stories of what seemed to us her exotic homeland where children skied to school, had summer

homes on the fjords and every Christmas baked hundreds of Scandinavian cookies for family and friends.

Though she spoke English with a distinctive Norwegian accent, my darling, diminutive grandma who lived to 102, rarely spoke a word of her native tongue (never an "uff-da"), reverting only as she lay dying to the language of her birth in speaking out loud "The Lord's Prayer."

I see and treasure that Norwegian heritage playing out in my mother's family even today with their northern Minnesota cabins in the pines, the foods we eat and our Christmas traditions, including hymns. (As youngsters, my sister and I sang the Lutheran hymn "[I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve](#)" in Norwegian to Grandma, bringing tears to her eyes. Waves of emotion still roll over me when I sing it.)

But what if, as happened to the indigenous people of this state – the Ojibwe -- my grandmother had been fearful of sharing her Norwegian roots? What if not speaking her native language had not been her choice?

Tom Barrett Sr., who heads the [Red Lake Chemical Health Program](#) for the [Red Lake Nation](#) north of Bemidji, can tell that story for his Ojibwe people.

"Our language was basically stripped from us a generation or two ago. The children were forbidden to talk their native language," says Barrett, 54, recalling how white authorities swept onto reservations and carried Ojibwe children off to boarding schools to assimilate to the white culture. And the ripple effects of that action are still being felt by Native Americans today.

As Carter Meland, a lecturer in American Indian Studies at the University of Minnesota, once told me: "History is a living part of the present."

Fearing their languages and traditions will disappear as their elders die, Native Americans of the [Red Lake Nation](#) north of Bemidji and across the nation are focused on a Language Revitalization Project and related efforts to retain the native culture.

Tribal authorities this week host the first Ojibwe Language and Culture Camp running Aug. 13-15 on the Red Lake reservation for youths 10 to 14 years old. The limit was 30 young people, but 45 signed on, and Barrett says they didn't have the heart to turn any away. Other years the tribe has spearheaded traditional hunting, berry-picking and fishing camps with similar purpose.

Part of a larger outreach program

The camp is one branch of a larger culture and language-outreach program that includes adults in the Red Lake Indian community as well. The Chemical Health Program starts offering Ojibwe language classes to staff this month.

The children will be bussed to Ponemah, one of four communities on the reservation, and a village respected for practicing many of the old practices. At camp they will participate in native Ojibwe sports and crafts, eat traditional foods, and engage in traditional spiritual ceremonies and plant-gathering practices.

The bigger aim?

"The overall philosophy is to re-connect them to nature and inevitably to themselves," explained Larry Stillday, 69, an elder whose grandparents were taken away to boarding school those many years ago.

"We feel if we can raise people's self esteem their chance of using chemicals will be less," Barrett said. Self esteem, he said, is all tied up with knowing who you are and having a sense of pride in your heritage, language and culture.

The Ojibwe holdings, which encompassed millions of acres at one time, are diminished and include a reservation of about 637,000 acres of slightly rolling and densely wooded land with lakes, swamps, peat bogs and prairies. There is high unemployment among the reservation's four communities, though three casinos provide employment opportunities.

"A lot of people are struggling and a lot of people are doing fairly well," Barrett said. Dealing with drug and alcohol abuse is an ongoing problem, despite more than 20 years of some progress through chemical prevention programs in the schools and throughout the community.

Language and traditional spiritual practices

A native speaker, Stillday, who lives in Ponemah, will teach not only the language but traditional spiritual practices, including smudging, a cleansing ceremony that involves the burning of sage, sweet grass, cedar and tobacco.

He will tell the Ojibwe creation story and demonstrate and involve the children in gratitude ceremonies performed at planting and harvest.

He and other elders will form relationships with the young people as they teach them Ojibwe everyday phrases such as "What's for supper?" and teach native names for plants.

A hunting camp last fall was also designed to reconnect youth with their people's tradition. Among other revered practices, youth learned the practice of making tobacco offerings of red willow to the creator for providing deer and to the deer for giving up its life.

The camp turned shy young men and women campers into more self-confident youth, and with that self-assurance came better behavior in school and at home, Barrett says.

The language and culture camp is sponsored by the Red Lake Chemical Health Program, Economic Development & Planning and Boys & Girls Club, and also financed in part with a prevention grant from the Minnesota State Department of Health.

One last thing I'd like to share about my grandma. There was much she prized about her Norwegian heritage, but she left that country determined to never again eat fish if she could help it. She'd had her fill, she said.

Separate worlds no more: Our perception of aboriginal art is changing

[Ottawa Citizen](#)

August 11, 2013

Peter Simpson



Harvest by Mary Anne Barkhouse. The National Gallery of Canada presents SAKAHAN, an International showing of contemporary indigenous art. Photograph by: Chris Mikula, The Ottawa Citizen

Are aboriginal artists in this country finally getting more attention from the Canadian mainstream? Is Canada's perception of aboriginal art changing?

Even aboriginal children from the Ottawa area have been visiting the National Gallery this summer to see *Sakahàn*, the exhibition of indigenous art from around the world, to learn about their own culture, about the art made by other aboriginals. The surprise and wonder of the children demonstrates that, as Ottawa Art Gallery curator Ola Wlusek says, "It's not only the non-aboriginals, but also aboriginals that are not necessarily educated in how their own culture is presented or represented."

The point is essential because it demonstrates, in an unexpected way, that the need to see aboriginal and non-aboriginal art in Canada as separate things, as separate worlds, is eroding as more people in the mainstream — aboriginal or otherwise — see what aboriginal art has become. The appropriation by aboriginal artists of western or European or "settler" art history and tradition, and of everyday consumer objects, has created a powerful medium, a rich foundation for dialogue between Canadians of all ancestries.

Consider *Shapeshifter*, a piece in the collection of the National Gallery and made by Brian Jungen, an aboriginal artist born in northern British Columbia. It's the skeleton of a whale, made entirely of the same cheap, crappy, plastic lawn chairs that are kicking around every cottage in Canada.

"That identification of a common, material life that we share expresses the idea that we all live in modernity together," says Ruth Phillips, the Canada research chair in aboriginal art and culture at Carleton University.

"Once people get past the notion that a native artist has to make something that is about traditional life or in a traditional form — that they have to make a mask hanging on the wall or a scene of a seal hunt — we can then see these much more interesting and valuable things about the way in which we share and do not share experience in the late 20th and early 21st century."

What we then see, Phillips says, is that "we have enough in common that we can relate to each other, but we have enough that's not in common that we need to pay attention and try to understand what the artist is telling us about different kinds of experience."

Many pieces of art in *Sakahàn* — the gallery's big summer show of indigenous art from around the world — incorporate common, everyday objects as a language to communicate ideas, including aboriginal examples from Canada. There are Jungen's decorated gas cans, and Mary Anne Barkhouse's evocative dining room table, or Sunny Assu's copper cups, or Kent Monkman's Louis Vuitton luggage made of birch bark. They say as much about traditional western art as they do about aboriginal perspective.

"When I started engaging with the 19th-century period of art history, it occurred to me that Europeans had discarded their own art history in a way," says Monkman, over the phone from Toronto.

"I mean, modernity really espoused this culture of amnesia ... My intent is to make the point that when you discard history, your tradition, you're kind of throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

"This period of modernity has been particularly devastating to indigenous cultures because our traditions were kind of turfed without our consent."

National Gallery director Marc Mayer agrees that aboriginal art's confident embrace of past and present in contemporary expression is a valuable lesson for modernists.

Aboriginal artists "do not deny their tradition, they do not deny history, they do not deny their ethnic identity, and yet they're individuals, and yet they speak freely with all of the tools at their disposal," Mayer says. "They don't come out of a tradition of breaking off with the past ... You see nothing but respect for the past.

"It's not the same story that we're getting from your urban, North American or western European contemporary artists," he says. "It's not the same perspective, but it enriches the pool immeasurably ... Canadian artists are so strong in that context, and it's a strong context."

Nonetheless, Mayer's first response to the central question — is the mainstream awareness of aboriginal art in Canada changing — is unequivocal: "I don't think it's changing fast enough," he says.

Sakahàn will heighten the perception many people have of Canadian aboriginal art, but it's only a step in a long, slow evolution. Michael Audain, a member of the National Gallery's board of directors and a tremendous collector of the aboriginal art of British Columbia, recalls his first visit to the gallery's current building, which opened in 1988.

"I was pretty surprised when I went to the (new building) for the first time in the mid-1990s," Audain says in a phone interview from Vancouver. "I went to the Canadian galleries and I found that, for the National Gallery, artmaking started with the ancient regime. Where was the art of what was going on before in this part of the world? It wasn't there. I'm delighted in recent years there's more interest shown in depicting the whole story of artmaking in our country, not just that of the post-colonial period."

He's speaking of the totality of aboriginal art, both contemporary — such as the Sonny Assu installation he loaned from his collection to Sakahàn, or Jim Hart's Three Watchmen, the totemic sculpture that Audain donated to the gallery two years ago

— and historic. “If you’re going to be interested in the art of British Columbia,” he says, by example, “you can’t just be interested in Emily Carr, you can’t just be interested in Jeff Wall or Rodney Graham. You’ve got to start where artmaking on this coast started, because artmaking’s been going on for thousands of years.”

Seeing the past and present of aboriginal art together and more frequently, in the National Gallery and other venues, is giving more people a full perspective on how the art of yesterday relates to that of today, says Candice Hopkins, one of three lead curators on Sakahàn.

“I think that now we’re finally getting to the point where we’re surpassing the kind of outdated or imagined notion that the height of esthetic production for aboriginal artists was at the time of European contact or just before,” says Hopkins, a member of the Yukon’s Carcross/Tagish First Nation who lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico. “I’d say even in the past five years there’s been a re-evaluation of the role that aboriginal artists have had in the development of modernism, not as secondary but as formative.”

This change is largely a result of aboriginal determination, says Monkman, who is of Cree and Irish ancestry. “That’s due to aboriginal artists in Canada pushing hard over a couple of generations and making inroads in institutions both as curators and visual artists, because I think those two really go hand in hand.”

Indeed they do, says Greg Hill, the Audain curator of indigenous art at the gallery and a curator of Sakahàn. “Certainly in Canada we’ve seen a real change in the representation of indigenous art, not only at the National Gallery but across the country in terms of its collecting and its display.

“This is something that’s happening not just in Canada, it’s happening around the world. This global momentum is leading to this exhibition here.”

The other tide that’s shifted is the ebbing of southern bias, Ruth Phillips says.

“Two or three decades ago, when contemporary indigenous artists ventured into cutting-edge, avant-garde media, many people thought that they should be doing things in ‘their’ tradition.

“I think we’ve lost that false position,” Phillips says.

“The revelation is that it’s not the Inuit artists who were not interested in using art to express experience of wide-ranging sorts, it’s the southern buyers who had these stereotypes in their heads. I think that is a huge shift, and it’s very important and welcome.”

Camosun College gets BC provincial funding for Aboriginal learners

[Nexus Newspaper](#)

August 12, 2013

Greg Pratt

In late June, the BC government announced that they were investing \$4.4 million in postsecondary institutions in 2013. The money will go towards programs and other activities that improve Aboriginal students' experiences at universities and colleges across the province. Eleven institutions received the funding, including Camosun.

The funding will go towards supporting postsecondary institutions' work with Aboriginal communities, institutes, and organizations, according to a BC government press release. The goal is to develop and deliver culturally relevant courses, programs, and supports to help Aboriginal learners' education and employment goals.

"Our government is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal learners can succeed in a postsecondary system that is integrated, relevant, and effective," says BC Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation minister John Rustad. "By facilitating and encouraging access to postsecondary education and training programs, Aboriginal communities and postsecondary institutions will play an important role in meeting BC's labour market needs, and in supporting the BC Jobs Plan."

Tony Nelson, Aboriginal education and community connections admissions and enrolment facilitator at Camosun College, says the funding is good news but would like to see an emphasis on long-term instead of short-term.

"That way real work and real plans can be made to truly embark on building a program that can truly reflect the retention and education goals that this college so desperately wants to put forward," he says.

Nelson says that one-off funding is helpful but has an inherent short-sightedness attached to it when it comes to larger goals for Aboriginal learners.

"Providing one-off funding or in three year blocks just isn't going to cut it, because nobody can plan beyond three years," he says. "Why would you want to build up a whole infrastructure for something that could go away in one or two or three years, if that funding is based on the will of the day, so to speak? If governments and institutions really want to be serious about Aboriginal recruitment and retention, then they need to come up with long-term strategies, and the government has to pony up the funds."

Some feel the funding may be good news, but it doesn't address larger issues. Simka Marshall, Camosun student and Aboriginal students liaison for the Canadian Federation of Students-BC, says it's definitely good to see money going into Aboriginal programs, but the government should be focusing on making sure Aboriginal students can get into school in the first place.

"I definitely think it's good to see money going into these existing programs," says Marshall, "and it is a big amount of money that's going into these services that support our Aboriginal learners. That's really important, because it is really challenging being an Aboriginal student in postsecondary. The one thing about this action the provincial government is taking is that it doesn't actually address the issue of access to postsecondary education for Aboriginal students, and it doesn't ensure that students who are already in postsecondary school have continued access to that education."



Simka Marshall, Aboriginal students liaison for CFS-BC (photo provided).

Marshall says that removing the two percent annual cap on expenditure increases that the Postsecondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) has would be a big step towards improving access. The program assists First Nation and Inuit students with funding; Marshall says if that cap were gone, it would be a great step to providing access. She says the other thing that would improve access would be lower tuition fees.

"Reducing tuition fees is the only thing that will increase access and remove some of those barriers," she says.

Shayli Robinson, Camosun College Student Society First Nations director, agrees with Marshall. She says the funding is "progress" and a "small step in the right direction." But she too feels that more needs to be done, particularly in regards to removing the PSSSP cap, which she feels is "unacceptable" to even have today.

"I can't speak for all the institutions, but I feel it to be a positive move," says Robinson about the funding. "However, it is not enough, and I feel the government may be trying to take attention away from the PSSSP."

Nelson agrees with Marshall that lowering tuition fees is part of the larger picture surrounding issues of access.

"That's part and parcel with everything," he says. "If tuition fees are a barrier to coming to school like they are for a lot of people, then some of the most

disadvantaged portions of the population, by logical extension, are not going to be able to come to school."

Haida House a symbol of aboriginal tourism's success

Globe and Mail

Aug. 12 2013, 8:00 AM EDT

Wendy Stueck



It used to be a hunting lodge.

These days, the Haida House at Tllaal – the Haida spelling for the nearby village of Tlell, on Haida Gwaii – caters to guests who tote cameras instead of shotguns.

The nine-room inn is also part of British Columbia's aboriginal tourism sector, which has grown in size and sophistication since 2006, when a government-backed strategic plan to nurture the sector got under way.

"If you look at the [Haida House] facility, it's a prototype of what we want to do in business – it has a lot of Haida employment, Haida architecture and menu – a Haida footprint on it that we are all very proud of," says Peter Lantin, president of the Council of the Haida Nation. "It is about respecting the land that we are on in a culturally appropriate way, not in an exploitive way like the bear hunt."

Built in the 1980s, the lodge was formerly known as the Tlell River House and served as a seasonal hunting facility. CHN acquired the lodge and other assets when it purchased the guide-outfitting licence for Haida Gwaii in 2011. The CHN had lobbied for an end to the sport bear hunt on Haida Gwaii for several years previously, spurred in part by a video posted online that showed a bear being shot several times before it stopped moving.

"The trophy aspects of it and that video were just so disgusting – that Haida Nation is now in a different environment, where we do have a lot of decision-making on the lands," Mr. Lantin said, adding that eco-tourism fits with other Haida business ventures, including forestry.

In April, the revamped inn won this year's accommodations award from the Aboriginal Tourism Industry of B.C.

Other award-winning operations included Whistler's Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre and the Spirit Bear Lodge in Haida Gwaii.

Aiming to tap global demand for "cultural" tourism experiences, the province launched an Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Blueprint Strategy in 2005.

According to figures from the Aboriginal Tourism Association, revenues generated by the sector doubled from \$20-million to \$40-million between 2006 and 2010. A strategy for 2012-2017 projects revenues of \$68-million by 2017.

Dozens of aboriginal communities – some far from urban centres – are considering or have launched tourism ventures including river-rafting tours, museums and bear-watching tours. A 2012 review found the sector accounted for an estimated 2,900 full-time positions, with about half of those filled by aboriginal workers.

"Some of the locations still have challenges in sustainability, but overall we are seeing a tremendously positive increase year by year," says Keith Henry, chief executive officer of the Aboriginal Tourism Association of B.C.

As an example of the trend, he cites the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, which has posted increased visit and revenue figures each year since it opened in 2008.

"They are actually becoming profitable and the [Squamish and Lillooet] nations are not having to subsidize it to the extent that they were previously," Mr. Henry said. "It's fair to say that they are starting to turn profits as a business. So not only is it good for cultural revitalization and jobs and all the things it does, it's actually becoming quite profitable."

Over the next five years, the association plans to spend \$10-million to improve current attractions and build new ones as well as marketing plans.

"We're limited by the ability of how much we can do with the number of products we can do right now," he adds. "I think this is a very good news story for all of British Columbia."

HIV/AIDS series: Aboriginal people hardest hit by HIV in B.C.

[Times Colonist](#)

August 9, 2013

Katherine Dedyna and Judith Lavoie



Charlotte Reading, director of the University of Victoria's Centre for Aboriginal Health Research, wants to see a national HIV/AIDS strategy for aboriginal people. "We are such a high-risk population," Reading says. "The burden of illness is so much higher." Photograph by: LYLE STAFFORD, Times Colonist

Aboriginal people are more likely to contract HIV, become infected younger, receive treatment later and die sooner than other British

Columbians, says the B.C. Ministry of Health.

Aboriginal communities often struggle with problems that make both prevention of HIV infections and accessing treatment difficult, said Dr. Dee Hoyano, Vancouver Island Health Authority medical health officer.

"We know aboriginal people are disproportionately more affected by HIV," she said.

First Nations members on Vancouver Island make up 5.8 per cent of the population, but account for 11 per cent of HIV cases.

Social marginalization, substance abuse, intravenous-drug use and exposure to sexual assault are all risk factors for aboriginals, Hoyano said. Unlike the rest of the HIV-positive population, men having sex with men is the lowest means of transmission among aboriginals.

First Nations are Canada's most vulnerable citizens and their HIV plight is complicated by the fact that responsibility for their health care is shared by federal and provincial governments, said Libby Davies, an NDP MP from Vancouver, who is federal Opposition health critic.

"HIV/AIDS in the aboriginal community is a very serious issue, but this is something the federal government has direct responsibility for in terms of aboriginal people on reserves," she said.

The Tripartite First Nations Health Plan, negotiated in 2006 by the First Nations Leadership Council and the B.C. and federal governments, identified HIV/AIDS as a priority, according to the provincial Health Ministry. Regional health authorities, including the Vancouver Island Health Authority, are working with community organizations and the First Nations Health Authority to improve HIV-related health outcomes in the province.

What's needed is a national HIV/AIDS strategy for aboriginal people, said Charlotte Reading, the director of the University of Victoria's Centre for Aboriginal Health Research. Reading recently received \$1.5 million to help establish a national aboriginal HIV research centre.

"We are such a high-risk population. The burden of illness is so much higher," said Reading, who is First Nations. She is part of the new HIV centre's 17-member leadership team, 12 of whom are of aboriginal descent.

The root cause of much aboriginal HIV is trauma, she said. "It's not IV drug use, it's not sex work."

Most aboriginals with HIV have been traumatized in one way or another, whether it's through the foster-care system or inter-generational fallout from residential schools, Reading said.

In most Canadian communities, men who have sex with men are the top risk group for developing HIV/AIDS, but in First Nations communities, those at highest risk are young women, says deputy provincial health officer Evan Adams.

"The initial thought was that aboriginal women had something about their biology that put them at risk," said Adams, a member of Sliammon First Nation.

But, that theory was scuttled after it was found indigenous populations around the world were more at risk of contracting communicable diseases even though there is no common biology.

"What we do have is social risk. Poor aboriginal women are way more socially vulnerable to HIV," Adams said.

Risk factors include poverty, sexual exploitation, chronic disease and violence, he said.

"They just don't have the same opportunity as others. Everyone likes to think we are all born equal, but there is a lot more that the system can do to help women at risk," he said.

The majority of new infections among B.C. aboriginals occur in intravenous-drug users who are also involved in sex work, mostly on Vancouver's downtown Eastside. Aboriginal women with HIV are frequently homeless or living in desperate straits, making interaction with health-care providers stressful.

They may feel a "lack of cultural safety" and judged by the assumptions about what led them to become HIV positive, Reading said.

"We definitely need more research money," she said.

"Outside the injection-drug-using population and people in desperate situations, we don't really know a lot about what's promoting transmission or what's inhibiting people from health-promoting or safe-sex practice or safe practices."

Even aboriginal people who carefully follow anti-retroviral treatment still die earlier than non-aboriginals because of social conditions such as poverty, she said.

Over the next three years, the aboriginal HIV centre is getting \$1.1 million for a cross-Canada study of parents and children who are HIV-positive. The money is

meant to identify aboriginal-specific solutions that may come out of storytelling circles or a gathering of affected families.

Reading said that many aboriginal people are not comfortable with top-down medical edicts due to the legacy of colonialism and the need for “long-standing, trustful” relationships that take in communities, not just individuals.

Strategies include treating infected people early — for their own health, and to prevent spread of the disease — and normalizing testing, by including it in general medical checkups.

Adams said, “Any aboriginal person should be able to get an HIV test without being deemed at risk. If we say it is a normal part of screening we will catch everyone as soon as possible.”

“It’s working pretty well.”

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Ex-premier tours native youth centre: Ambassador to U.S. back from Beltway

[Winnipeg Free Press](#)

August 13, 2013

Alexandra Paul



KEN GIGLIOTTI / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS Canadian Ambassador to the U.S. Gary Doer and Manitoba cabinet minister Kevin Chief meet traditional dancers at Monday's gathering.

WASHINGTON'S Beltway is far cry from Winnipeg's North End.

But for an hour Monday, a visit by Canada's ambassador to the United

States lent a sparkle of political glitz to the 'hood.



Canadian Ambassador to the U.S. Gary Doer and his wife, Ginny Devine, receive handmade dream catchers, with Manitoba cabinet minister Kevin Chief (left) and youth leader Sterling Muskego. (KEN GIGLIOTTI / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS)

"Gary Doer once called this place one of the best-kept secrets in Winnipeg," said Kevin Chief, Manitoba's minister of children and youth opportunities as he waited for Doer and his wife, Ginny Devine, outside the Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre at Dufferin Street and Sinclair Avenue.

Behind Chief, a colourful welcome banner bearing the Canadian and American flags hung over the front entrance Monday.

Inside, the walls were adorned with the names of the 100 schools that send kids to the WASAC programs every year.

Everywhere, paper wainscotting pinned to the walls was inked with kids' messages about their future hopes and dreams.

WASAC's focus is to build aboriginal youth's leadership and mentorship skills through sport and recreational programs. The organization helps to lift barriers for thousands of children every year and is Canada's largest employer of aboriginal children and youth. From suicide-prevention programs to leadership training and university scholarships, the program offers chances for underprivileged youth to transform their lives.

Doer's appearance was intended to raise the profile of the centre and give this year's kids at summer camp a boost of confidence.

"Some of the kids will know him but all of them will know a very important person has come. It sends a powerful message that all the work they're doing is appreciated, locally and nationally and internationally," Chief said.

Chief was a co-founder of WASAC and until he entered politics, he served as the centre's executive director. Premier Greg Selinger created Chief's current portfolio to focus attention on the need for youth opportunities.

Youth leader Sterling Muskego, 21, had a broad smile that lights up his face and a gentle handshake that conceals strength of spirit. A graduate of Sisler High School, he's on track for a university scholarship. Culinary arts, acting or child care are in his future plans, he said.

His job Monday was lead marshal for the visit.

Muskego led Doer and Devine through the displays, explaining support from the likes of schools and corporate sponsors, the cultural values of the work, the braids of sweetgrass, the hand drums and a buffalo skull.

He presented Doer, Devine and Chief with cakes made in their honour and then handmade dream catchers with icon emblems: A buffalo for Doer as leader, a beaver to Devine for wisdom and a wolf to Chief for humility.

"Little Chief," as Muskego is called, is also a cancer survivor. His biological mother put him in foster care when he was diagnosed with leukemia and she couldn't care for him, yet he has no time for bitterness or self-pity and said he credits his foster family, Chief and WASAC for giving him confidence and a strong mind. "I'd rather be happy," he said simply.

Doer applauded the program and the summer camp that serves more than 1,500 kids every year and turns out another 800 youth leaders.

Seven city bridges to feature First Nation-themed banners

[660 News](#)

Aug 12, 2013 11:55:59 PM

Tanya Blakney

Seven bridges in and around the city will soon feature a new series of First Nations-themed banners.

The series showcases Canadian artist, Will Yee, who says stories from our history can be a reminder of transformative realities such as birth, change, adversity and death.

Yee says, "as I read about the First Nation's people and learned more about their oral history, I found I appreciated their respect for the commonality we all share with nature and the local wildlife around Calgary."

The bridge banners are part of the Centre City Banner Program that began in 2008.

The program is jointly funded by the Downtown Improvement Fund and the Public Art Program and managed by the City of Calgary.

Project manager Graham Gerylo says, "the goal is to create a rich experience for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers in the centre city."

The banners will be installed throughout the month of August at Olympic Plaza and Gateway bridges leading into Centre City including 14th Street, Louise (10th Street), Centre Street, Langevin (Edmonton Trail) and Zoo bridges.

Queen's University addresses sustainability in the Far North

[EcoSeed](#)

August 13, 2013



New program will help students address sustainability challenges in the Far North

A professor at the Queen's University in Canada has designed a program that will provide young researchers with the tools to address sustainability challenges in the Far North.

Dr. Mark Green, university professor, designed the six-year program called Sustainability Engineering in Remote Areas

with the goal of promoting sustainability in remote communities, specifically, those in the Far North.

Under the program, students will study Aboriginal culture, sustainability, business and research to address three areas: natural resources and energy; information and communications technologies; and economic development and education for Aboriginal people.

"Our focus with this project is renewable energy systems and sustainable, energy efficient buildings in remote communities. There are a lot of challenges in Northern communities in terms of housing and buildings in general. Energy costs are very expensive. We are going to be looking at wind, solar, water and biomass," explained Dr. Green.

In support of Dr. Green's program, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada will be providing \$1.65 million through its Collaborative Research and Training Experience program to fund the initiative over a period of six years, essentially helping it in getting the project off the ground.

"S.E.R.A. uniquely combines training for work in special conditions, such as remote, less populated areas with fragile ecosystems, with an enhanced understanding of the societal and cultural impacts of such work. The funding from NSERC will allow students to engage first-hand with our Aboriginal communities, as well to work towards improving sustainability," said Steven Liss, vice-principal of research. – *EcoSeed Staff*

First Nations women in Ontario at high risk, chiefs say

SooToday.com

August 13, 2013



Chiefs of Ontario highlight third death of First Nation woman in city of Toronto as calls for inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women as dismissed by federal Tories

TORONTO, ON (August 13, 2013) - As calls for a national Inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women are dismissed by

the federal Tories in Canada, the list of suspicious deaths of First Nations women in Ontario mounts.

Just eight months into this year, three suspicious deaths of First Nations women have occurred in the City of Toronto alone raising alarm from the Chiefs of Ontario Women's Caucus.

The deceased include Cheyenne Fox (Sheguiandah First Nation), Terra Gardner (Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation) and more recently, Bella Laboucan McLean (Sturgeon Lake Cree First Nation).

Some of the families of these women who have died in the City of Toronto have raised concerns about the under-investigations of their deaths and inadequate police complaint mechanisms and oversight procedures.

According to the database held by the Native Women's Association of Canada, there are 70 cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Ontario, almost all (90 percent) of these women are or were mothers and almost half (45 percent) of these cases remain unsolved.

"I am not sure who else besides the Conservative government doesn't want a national Inquiry, focusing on prevention will not address this growing problem," stated Ontario Regional Chief Stan Beardy.

Three weeks ago the Premiers of the provinces in Canada unanimously also backed this call.

Numerous other civil society organizations both in Canada and internationally have done the same.

A provincial working group and a federal special parliamentary committee have also been working to address violence against Aboriginal women but First Nations leaders say they are no substitute to an independent national inquiry process which will hear directly from families and communities of victims and will lead to an examination of root causes and a national strategy.

Through the Assembly of First Nations and on their own, the 133 First Nations in Ontario have been demanding a National Inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

At their annual meeting in June 2013 they endorsed a very significant declaration to support ending violence and abuse in communities and against First Nations peoples.

This declaration arose out of the growing epidemic of violence and abuse facing many First Nations peoples, especially women and girls, in their families, in their communities and elsewhere.

"First Nations leaders have affirmed their commitment to ensure women are safe in First Nation communities but in society at large, we hold the governments accountable for their respectful treatment, safety and protection," stated Beardy.

Many First Nations women and girls face unbelievable conditions that put them in an extremely vulnerable and unsafe position.

First Nations women in Ontario are not only at very high risk of enduring violence and abuse wherever they live, they are also severely overrepresented in the correctional system.

While First Nations people represent only 2 percent of the total population in Ontario, First Nations women represent 53 percent of the prison population in the northern region of Ontario and 20 percent of female prison population province-wide.

Systemic discrimination has been cited as one of the root causes.

On the week of August 5, 2013, representatives of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights came to Canada to analyze the situation of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in British Columbia.

They will be issuing a report on their findings. Next month, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women will also be sending two experts to investigate the issue.

The Chiefs of Ontario Women's Caucus is hoping to file an intervention on the situation in the province.

The Chiefs of Ontario is a political forum, and a secretariat for collective decision making, action, and advocacy for the 133 First Nation communities located within the boundaries of the province of Ontario, Canada.

First Nations band together to study power projects

[Chilliwack Times](#)

August 12, 2013

Tyler Olsen

A First Nations tribe is looking to develop a plan that could have a major impact on the future of run-of-river power projects in the Chilliwack River Valley.

There are active claims to four different creeks in the valley, but before they proceed, the proponents must consult with the Ts'elxwéyeqw Tribe, a society that includes seven different local bands.

With the first project-on Tamihi Creek-in the works, the Ts'elxwéyeqw (which used to be known as the Ch-ihl-kway-uhk) is now developing a comprehensive plan that will look at the impact of power projects on the river valley as a whole rather than on a case-by-case basis.

"Pretty much every creek in the Chilliwack River Valley has some sort of claim to it," Ts'elxwéyeqw chief operations officer Matt Wealick told the Times. "We are looking at how they all work together" The four creeks with active claims are Nesakwatch, Centre, Frosst, and Tamihi creeks. Proponents of run-of-river projects usually focus on issues surrounding their own projects. But Wealick notes that such projects do not exist within a vacuum. (Individually, power projects may have a minor impact on the valley. But multiple projects can have larger, cumulative effects).

Although the creeks do not lie within a reserve, legislation requires any resource development on Crown land to include consultation and accommodation of First Nations.

"We want to know how it's going impact on cultural values, how it will impact the recreation in the Chilliwack River Valley, how it will impact our forestry businesses, how it will impact any other particular use," Wealick said. "Is the infrastructure there to handle all of them?" Earlier this year, local kayakers expressed their concerns about power development on the Tamihi.

Wealick said First Nations groups share many of the same concerns of recreation users; he said the tool being developed by the Ts'elxwéyeqw would also look at how the power projects impact other users of the river.

The Ts'elxwéyeqw has received \$30,000 from the provincial government towards completing the plan. "I think it's going to be a good tool to help assess these things," he said. "For us, we just get tired of doing one project at a time."

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Time to leave the park--says First Nations Chief

[Comox Valley Local News](#)

August 12, 2013

Marc Mulvaney



The "World Rainbow Gathering" has been told to pack up and leave by a hereditary chief and forestry coordinator of the Quatsino First Nations based in Port Hardy.

BC Parks has shut down the area, citing health, safety and environmental concerns in having so many people at such a remote locale.

Ralph Wallas flew in by helicopter with BC Parks officials over the weekend.

"I fully agree with BC Parks decision, the amount of people that were expected to come was just a bit too much for the park to sustain, I believe."

"They did promise to leave the site better than they found it. The people that were there seemed to be genuinely interested in their cause, but we informed them that it is not really them, and the true believers in their cause that worries us. Our concern is the people that are coming after them, who are there just for the sake of partying and looking at nude people."

Wallas says their first mistake was on the communication front, in not consulting with First Nations prior to embarking on their planned month long campout in traditional aboriginal territory.

In a statement issued today, World Rainbow officials agree they should have consulted aboriginal leaders, and will decide on a new location for their campout in a few days time.

"The family reached consensus that in spite of the hypocrisy of thousands of logged acres of sacred forest in an area where "environmental concerns" were cited as a reason against our gathering, we requested that if an elder of the Quatsino Band personally asked us to leave the site, out of respect for their tradition we would oblige. Yesterday the Park Service brought a Quatsino representative by helicopter

who directly asked us to comply with their desire for us to vacate the land."

"We now have scouts actively searching for a new location for our gathering. We want to have consensus on a new site from the World Rainbow Council in Raft Cove in the next 48 hours. The new site will NOT be communicated publically via Facebook but via private messages and word-of-mouth to avoid the media fallout that surrounded Raft Cove. We ask you to respect this decision from the Rainbow Council."

First Nations challenge Canada-China investment deal

[Upi.com](http://upi.com)

Aug. 12, 2013 at 6:27 PM

OTTAWA, Aug. 12 (UPI) -- Canada's First Nations is challenging the government's investment treaty with China, saying tribal leaders were not consulted on the deal.

The challenge was filed in federal court by the Hupacasath First Nation in British Columbia and contends the federal government is required to consult First Nations under Section 35 of the Constitution Act, which protects the rights of aboriginal peoples in Canada, the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. reported.

Brenda Sayers, a member of the Hupacasath First Nations, said if the treaty is ratified, Chinese investors would have control over major assets such as coal on its 573,284-acre territory.

"We are saying that the federal government failed to consult," Sayers said.

However, lawyers for the federal government say the consultation law does not apply in this case.

"The [Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement] contains the exceptions found in our other treaties that preserve policy flexibility for certain sectors and activities, including rights or preferences provided to aboriginal peoples," International Trade Minister spokesman Ed Fast said.

"Furthermore, the Canada-China FIPA, like Canada's other FIPAs, provides a policy carve-out for government measures concerning rights or preferences provided to aboriginal peoples," said Rudy Husny, spokesman for the minister of international trade.

Accelerating growth for Aboriginal entrepreneurs and communities

[Canada NewsWire](#)

August 13, 2013

The [Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business \(CCAB\)](#) is pleased to host the third annual Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Conference and Trade Show 2013 (AECTS 2013) on November 4, 5 and 6, 2013, at the Hilton Lac-Leamy in Gatineau, Quebec.

This event will highlight the significant role Aboriginal people, communities and businesses play in the economic development of Canada. Major projects happening across Canada and positive attitudes from corporate Canada towards partnering with Aboriginal businesses and communities have primed the Aboriginal business sector for success.

"As host, I am excited by how this conference facilitates business deals and builds relationships for Aboriginal entrepreneurs so that they can have success now and in the future", says JP Gladu, CEO and President of the CCAB. "Aboriginal Businesses is now firmly on the road to significant growth in Canada. The changing attitude towards the importance of Aboriginal companies is creating an opportunity for deals that will benefit our communities with jobs and investment. This year's conference will showcase not just why, but how these opportunities can become reality".

AECTS 2013 is an opportunity for players in the Aboriginal community to connect with major developers from the private sector and government. Entrepreneurs at this three-day event, with 400 participants and over 40 exhibitors, will learn how to fully participate in the many lucrative projects being initiated in Canada.

This year, the conference starts November 4th with a full day of, by appointment, meetings to facilitate actual business to business opportunities. Then November 5th and 6th will be fully scheduled with a myriad of opportunities to learn from experts and key stakeholders while connecting with Aboriginal business leaders and corporate Canada.

Supporting Federal departments include [Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada \(AANDC\)](#), [Human Resources and Skills Development Canada \(HRSDC\)](#), [Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada \(DFAIT\)](#) and [Natural Resources Canada \(NRCan\)](#).

Save the date! Further details on the agenda and registration will be posted soon.

About the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB): The CCAB was founded in 1984 by a small group of visionary business and community leaders committed to the full participation of Aboriginal people in Canada's economy. A

national non-profit organization, CCAB offers knowledge, resources, and programs to both mainstream and Aboriginal owned member companies that foster economic opportunities for Aboriginal people and businesses across Canada.

To view the 2012 legacy site, visit www.entrepreneurship2012.indigenous.net/.

SOURCE Brent Moore & Associates Inc. (BMA)

First Nations don't want Harper's Family Homes on Reserves Bill

Rabble.ca

14 August 2013 13:16

Pamela Palmater

This letter is in direct response to the letter submitted by Jason McDonald, Director of Communications for Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) Bernard Valcourt to the Montreal Gazette on August 7, 2013. INAC has gone to great lengths to spread misinformation about the intentions, interpretations and potential impacts of Bill S-2 Family Homes of Reserve and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act. It is interesting to note the Minister had his communications person write this letter, rather than a Justice Canada lawyer.

Despite the near unanimous rejection of previous versions of this bill and Harper's infamous promise to First Nations at the Crown First Nations Gathering not to unilaterally amend the Indian Act, the Harper government has spared no expense in its propaganda campaign to gain support for this unconstitutional bill.

What follows is my response to INAC's misinformation about the bill. I have testified before Senate as a legal expert on a previous version of this bill, but was specifically prevented by Conservative members from testifying on the new version. I have also published other blogs on this bill [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

INAC: The bill "extends to people living on reserve the same basic rights and protections that individuals living off reserve enjoy regarding the family home."

This is not true. Indigenous Nations are sovereign nations with their own laws, rules, policies, governments, and justice systems. Their status as sovereign Nations are recognized in the fact of treaty making, as only sovereign Nations can enter into treaties with one another -- citizens of a state do not have that right. Their legal right to govern themselves is also protected in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 as an inherent right (pre-existing to Canada as a state and not granted or given through law). The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous

Peoples (UNDRIP) as well as other international laws also protect the right of First Nations to be self-determining.

First Nations have exclusive jurisdiction to determine their own laws, rules and procedures in relation to any marital or property issues on their traditional, treaty or reserve lands. When INAC claims they are extending the same basic rights to those living on reserve, what they mean is that they are illegally imposing provincial laws on reserve contrary to section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867, section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 and contrary to various treaties and international laws. This legislation will also require the consent of the provinces and companion legislation to bring it into effect.

Even the description of a house on reserve as the family home is misleading. On many reserves, homes are occupied by upwards of 25 people including husband, wife, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Certificates of Possession (like fee simple deeds) can be in the name of hundreds of people. Many First Nation families do not exist as the western notion of nuclear family with mom, dad and 2.5 children. Any disposition of what is deemed a family home could have devastating effects on large extended families and especially elders.

First Nations have not asked for this bill.

INAC: Bill S-2 does not change the fact that only registered Indians can hold a Certificate of Possession on reserve, but non-First Nations people can possess the home for a temporary period of time.

This statement is misleading about the real implications of the bill. The Indian Act prevents anyone who is not an Indian from even temporarily possessing land on a reserve -- which includes permanent structures on the land, like a house. Section 20(1) of the Indian Act specifies:

20 (1) No Indian is lawfully in possession of land in a reserve unless, with the approval of the Minister, possession of the land has been allotted to him by the council of the band.

What INAC is trying to do is unilaterally amend the Indian Act in an illegal way -- in violation of domestic and international law. Section 2 of the Indian Act specifies that reserve lands are reserved for the exclusive use and benefit of the band (First Nation) for which they were set aside. These lands are not for anyone else's use.

Further, many treaties set up reserve lands for the exclusive use and benefit of Indians -- not non-Indians. These treaties are now constitutionally and internationally protected and cannot be unilaterally amended. This country would not exist but for the treaties which agreed to share the land -- now they are constitutionally protected and cannot be violated if Canada wishes to remain a

democratic country. Harper can't pick and choose which constitutional provisions he likes -- Canada is either democratically governed with a constitution or it is a lawless dictatorship.

INAC does not have the power or authority to enact legislative provisions, such as this, that would be in direct conflict with its own constitution and other laws. INAC is also not being truthful when it claims that the Act only allows temporary possession by non-Indians. In fact, non-Indians can gain up to a life interest in lands and homes on reserve. This is far from temporary and combined with other proposed legislative amendments, this could translate into permanent possession.

INAC: The courts need this legislation to facilitate emergency protection orders to remove a violent partner from the home.

This is not true. INAC has focused on this legislation as being intended to protect First Nations women from violence, which it implies is rampant on every reserve. Government representatives have presented a false choice between First Nations women being tossed from their homes in the middle of the night or protecting self-government for First Nations. Yet, INAC has offered no statistical, research-based or other evidence to prove that women losing their homes on reserve is a rampant or common occurrence.

In direct contrast to their testimony, INAC has confirmed that the majority of CPs are held by women, not men. Additionally, when First Nations women living in shelters were interviewed about this legislation, the women emphasized the fact that their interests are not separate from their First Nation community -- and that none of them wanted their community's Aboriginal or treaty rights violated such as this legislation does.

This line of reasoning being promoted by INAC amounts to spreading racist, hateful stereotypes about First Nations for political purposes. INAC wants support to do indirectly, what Canada is not legally permitted to do directly -- take the remaining amount of lands held by First Nations and transfer them to Canadians, corporations and governments.

If this legislation was about protecting First Nation women, they would have built more homes on reserve, funded new shelters, increased funding for preventative services and increased funding for access to legal services for these women. Instead they have created a new legal regime that the majority of First Nation women will never be able to access.

What is also extremely concerning about this provision is that it purports to empower courts to issue protection orders (possession of home to spouse) as against the alleged abuser in the absence of a charge or conviction. It also empowers the court to make possession orders for homes and lands on reserve --

which are communal First Nation property -- without any notice to the First Nation or any of the family members impacted by the order, like elders. This provision violates the basic human rights and freedoms of First Nations and further denies individuals any administrative fairness and justice.

INAC: The ratification process outlined in the bill is done according to First Nation practices and is to ensure the collective interests are protected.

Again, this is not true. The ratification process as outlined in the bill is a paternalistic control mechanism to ensure First Nations comply with INAC objectives -- it is not consistent with First Nation customs, traditions, practices or laws. Some First Nations already have their own laws in this regard, but INAC refuses to recognize these laws, and instead demands that First Nations engage in an Indian Affairs-designed and controlled process. If the concern was truly that laws are needed in this area, then INAC would recognize those First Nation laws.

Similarly, this legislation is not designed to respect collective interests to homes and lands on reserve, but is intended to further carve out individual interests and create new legal interests for non-Indians. According to INAC, reserve lands represent less than 0.2 per cent of all the lands First Nations used to control. For INAC to want to divide up and steal the rest of those lands is unconscionable, let alone illegal. The spirit and intent of our nation to nation treaties was to share the wealth, not usurp it all for one treaty partner and leave the other impoverished and living on hand-outs.

First Nations have exclusive jurisdiction over their own laws and enforcement mechanisms and do not need INAC approval or supervision to deal with these issues. This provision is a gross violation of the constitutionally and internationally protected right to be self-governing.

INAC: INAC has consulted extensively with First Nations on this issue.

This is not true. In fact, INAC's own Special Ministerial Representative on Matrimonial Law on Reserve who interviewed First Nations individuals, communities and organizations all over Canada, concluded that none of the information packages or meetings to date amounted to legal consultation as required under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. INAC representatives themselves told attendees at several meetings that various discussions were not intended as consultation. Further, several meetings held with national organizations does not constitute legal consultations with the First Nation communities who actually hold the Aboriginal and treaty rights impacted.

Consultation is supposed to be a mutually negotiated, designed and funded process which ensures impacted First Nations communities (in this case, all 615) are fully informed about the legislation and its intended impacts as well as take measures to accommodate their concerns and obtain their consent. This simply did not occur.

The Supreme Court of Canada has stressed repeatedly that Canada is legally obligated to consult, accommodate and in many cases, obtain the consent of First Nations prior to taking any action or decision that has the potential to impact constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights. UNDRIP further requires that Canada must obtain the free, informed and prior consent of First Nations before impacting their rights.

This has not happened and in fact, each version of this bill has been nearly unanimously rejected by First Nations men, women and communities all over Canada.

INAC: Canada is further supporting First Nations by creating a national Centre of Excellence to help First Nations implement these laws.

This new Centre was not requested by First Nations. If INAC wanted to support First Nations they would not have made substantial funding cuts to all the National, regional and provincial First Nation organizations that already assist First Nations with law development and implementation. Finally, law development is costly in any government, and INAC is expecting First Nations to develop and implement these laws without any funding support.

INAC is clearly not genuinely concerned about empowering First Nations governments, but is instead reverting back to nation-wide, one-size-fits-all paternalistic control. We all know what happens when INAC has control: we have deaths and torture in residential schools, lack of clean water and safe sanitation systems on reserve, housing crises, lack of education, suicide epidemics and other conditions of forced impoverishment.

It's time INAC got out of the business of controlling First Nations and let them govern themselves -- they couldn't do any worse than the atrocities already committed by Canada on our people.

Keeping a traditional art form alive

[Northern View](#)

August 14, 2013



Verna Hunt of the Kwakwakwakw Nation works on a piece.
Shaun Thomas photo

In the small space of the former carving shed, seven women came together last week to learn from one another, to inspire each other and to ensure a traditional First Nations art form

remains a vibrant part of the culture.

The women – members of the Tsimshian, Haida, Nisga'a and Kwakwakawakw nations – are among the few in the world who practice Chilkat weaving, one of the most complex weaving techniques in the world but one that produces beautiful blankets, robes, aprons and leggings adorned with faces and symbols of the culture. These finished pieces would be worn by Chiefs and people of high status within the nation during potlatches – only a few Nations have the right to wear these blankets and fewer individuals have the right to weave them.

The women, along with teacher Willy White, are among only 30 or 40 Chilkat weavers in the world.

"The word for this in our language is gwishalyaht, which translates to spirit wrapped around you. When you put that robe around you, you're being wrapped in the spirit. It is all about the supernatural world we live beside," explained Willy White, who taught the women and said there are very strict protocols involved in the weaving.

"Chilkat weaving is a gift. Not everyone is given to doing this ... it's just not for everyone to learn."

Aside from the amount of time, patience and expertise needed to create a Chilkat-weaved piece, the art form laid dormant for many years because of the restriction placed on First Nations culture.

"The importance of Chilkat weaving is that it gets danced. They get used in ceremonies, potlatches and they get danced. I was very fortunate from a young age to see them danced and see my grandmother weave ... when she passed away I saw them danced but nobody was weaving them," explained Donna Cranmer, a Kwakwakawakw weaver who has been weaving for 20 years

"There was a time when the government outlawed our culture, and that is when a lot of people gave it up ... there were people who were strong enough not to give it up though, they kept doing it and kept it alive."

White, who was taught to weave from a young age, has been doing everything in his power to keep the art form alive. Through his work, Chilkat weaving once again has a strong future on the North Coast.

"I teach because I want to pass on what I have learned for future generations," he said.

"The goal is that I teach one woman in each village and she takes her niece or granddaughter aside and teaches them to weave ... all of these women are going to be teachers."

The gathering, entitled Chilkat Weavers Circle 2013: Strengthening the Warp, is a rare chance for those who create this artwork to come together in the spirit of learning and fellowship. The last time such a gathering was held was in 2000, 13 years ago. Throughout the week, the women shared with each other different techniques and skills including working with mountain goat wool, dyeing the wool using traditional and natural items and joinery techniques for the work.

"This week has been a very strong, powerful medicine for us because it is so great to be with other artists and spend this time together ... we don't have the time usually, we have to struggle to make time and we all have second jobs to support our art," said Carol Young, a Nisga'a and Haida artist.

"It is a very lonely craft. Most of us work alone in our homes, so it is very nice to come together and inspire each other," said Sherri Dick, a Haida weaver from Haida Gwaii.

"To come out and weave with all these ladies who have so much knowledge, it's inspiring and I am humbled by it to be honest," said Pearl Innis, a Tsimshian weaver.

The gathering was made possible by a \$20,000 grant from the Canadian Council for the Arts following an application from Joanne Finlay.

"The significance of the art form for me is that it is something that is used and has been used in our culture forever," she said.

"The knowledge in this room is incredible. Truly incredible".

Of note, five of the few Chilkat weavers practicing today reside in Prince Rupert, making it one of the highest concentrations of weavers in the world.

Suicide of 11-year-old Nunavut boy sparks outrage, but what will change?

[Yahoo! News](#)

August 14, 2013

Steve Merti



A person walks past a stop sign in the city of Iqaluit, Nunavut on March 28, 2009. Aboriginal Canadians, especially First Nations young people, have by far the highest rates of suicide in Canada.

Still, news that an 11-year-old boy in Nunavut killed himself has shocked Canadians.

Of course it must stop. But how?

Despite periodic reporting of suicide clusters in aboriginal communities, ordinary people feel helpless to tackle the despair, isolation and hopelessness that plagues these places. Drug and alcohol abuse, violence, rape and sexual abuse of children become endemic. The young especially feel trapped.

Imagine being 11 and concluding your life is over.

Whenever these stories break, they're followed by calls to "do something." But despite promises to provide more mental health services, support for families and greater economic opportunities, little seems to change in these remote places.

The report on [Nunatsiaq Online](#) that an 11-year-old boy killed himself in Repulse Bay, a village of about 750 on the northwestern shore of Hudson's Bay, triggered predictable calls for the Nunavut government to deal with the territory's sky-high suicide rate.

"The silence is deafening," former Nunavut MP Jack Anawak, now a vice-president at Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., told the news site.

"The leadership doesn't want to rock the boat. It's time people started saying 'let's talk about it,' rather than saying 'if we don't talk about it will go away'."

The [Huffington Post](#) noted Nunavut's suicide rate — whose 34,000 population is about the size of Moose Jaw, Sask., — far outstrips the rest of Canada, averaging 65.1 per 100,000, compared with the national average of 11.5. Even other northern territories such as the Yukon (5.9) and Northwest Territories (16) experience far lower suicide rates.

Aboriginal youth kill themselves at five or six times higher rates than their non-aboriginal counterparts.

[Health Canada](#) says suicide rates for Inuit youth (Inuit make up the largest percentage of Nunavut's population) are 11 times the national average and are among the highest in the world.

The *Huffington Post* pointed out there was a similar spasm of outrage and demands for action after three people, including two teens, killed themselves in the Nunavut community of Pangnirtung in May.

The territory created a suicide-prevention action plan in 2011, including public awareness and education campaigns and improved access to counselling for isolated

communities. But critics have questioned its effectiveness, according to [The Canadian Press](#).

For me, it comes down to this. For those of us living in that 200-kilometre-wide strip of Canada along the U.S. border, much of what happens in the North seems to have little connection with our lives.

We shake our heads about the problems on First Nations reserves or northern communities reached only by plane, but we can't seem to relate.

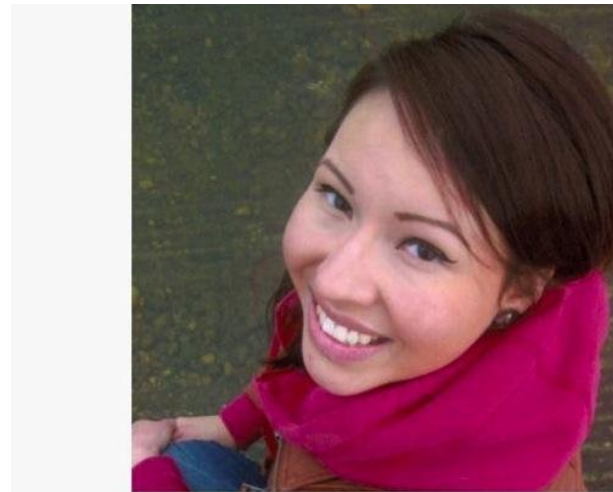
Do we feel the same detachment when it happens in our front yard?

What if we treated the death of this 11-year-old northern Canadian boy with the same ongoing outrage as we have the suicides of [Rehtaeh Parsons](#) or [Amanda Todd](#)? Maybe then we'd push our leaders to actually "do something."

Mysterious, Tragic Death of Aboriginal Activist's Sister Renews Calls for National Inquiry

[Indian Country Today](#)

August 12, 2013



Toronto Star/Facebook. Bella Laboucan-McLean, 25, fell or was pushed from a 31st-floor condo in a Toronto high-rise. She was the third death in as many months of an aboriginal woman under suspicious circumstances. Among those she leaves behind is prominent Lubicon Cree rights and environmental activist Melina Laboucan-Massimo.

Lubicon Cree activist and Greenpeace environmental advocate Melina Laboucan-Massimo has watched development in the Alberta oil

sands eat away at her First Nations culture and community.

But no amount of heartache could prepare her and her family for the hole that has been ripped in their lives at the mysterious, suspicious death of Laboucan-Massimo's 25-year-old sister.

Nearly a month after Bella Laboucan-McLean fell to her death from the 31st story of a Toronto high-rise on July 20, the death is being investigated by police. But few answers have surfaced.

"[It's] pretty horrific to lose a sibling, but the nature in which it happened is just another level of just—it's like a horrible nightmare," Laboucan-Massimo told [CBC News](#) on August 2.

The family is seeking any tips. The recent grad of the fashion-design program at Humber College was found on the ground outside a Toronto condominium development on July 20. According to the scant details available, she had attended an event on the evening of July 19, then went to an apartment in the building. As many as six people were in the unit, but they did not call emergency services until the following afternoon, the *Toronto Star* reported.

"A neighbor overhead noises, and then a loud bang at 4:55 a.m.," the [Toronto Star](#) reported. "Police arrived on the scene immediately but had no way to know from which unit she had fallen. The people with whom she was with did not call in the incident until that afternoon. They allege they had not noticed her fall."

Police have classified the death as suspicious, the *Star* said.

"There were six people in this small condo," Detective Darren Worth told the newspaper. "For something to happen and not see?"

Besides Laboucan-Massimo, Laboucan-McLean is survived by two other older sisters and two younger brothers, the *Star* said. Laboucan-Massimo told the *Star* she hoped the people who were with her sister that night will come forward. She does not know who they were.

"You'd think that the people who were with her that night would honor her life, would honor the person that she was," she said. "She was very dedicated, a hard worker, and she was a very loving and caring person."

Cree environmental activist and actress Tantoo Cardinal and author Naomi Klein were among a few dozen people who attended a vigil held for Laboucan-McLean on Sunday August 4 outside the building where she was found.

Laboucan-McLean was the third unexplained death of an aboriginal woman in Toronto in recent months. The *Star* said that 20-year-old Cheyenne Fox died in April after she, too, fell from a 24th-story condo. "Despite calls for an inquest into her death, her father John Fox was told 'within hours' by Toronto police that it was a suicide," the newspaper reported.

Terra Gardner was 26 when she was fatally struck by a train in May after complaining that she was receiving death threats for testifying in a murder trial, the *Star* said. Nevertheless, "police told reporters they did not suspect foul play."

The deaths underscore the urgency expressed by the premiers of all the provinces, who called for a national inquiry into the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women, of which there are hundreds of unsolved cases across Canada. In July the premiers met with First Nations, Inuit and Métis leaders before a two-day summit in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, for the Council of the Federation and backed calls by the Native Women's Association of Canada for a national inquiry, [CBC News](#) reported.

Laboucan-Massimo is determined that her sister not become a statistic or be classified as a suicide.

"Bella would have never done anything to intentionally harm herself and we know that something went wrong," said Laboucan-Massimo to CBC News. "And that's why we are asking for people to come forward with any information that could help with this investigation."

Laboucan-Massimo is a prominent activist and environmentalist who has been outspoken against further development in the Alberta oil sands, in her nation's territory.

WildSafeBC targets local bands

[Kamloops This Week](#)

August 14, 2013

Cavelle Layes

A new program is aiming to build bridges and close gaps with local First Nations bands.

WildSafeBC has had a busy year with the launch of the new branch in its program.

The latest addition to the organization is designed to extend existing resources by making them more assessable to local bands.

Josh Gottfriedson of the Tk'emlups Indian Band is this year's First Nations ambassador and has been travelling to local First Nations communities to listen to their concerns and work at finding viable solutions.

"I have been very excited to learn about the wildlife first-hand," Gottfriedson said.

Growing up in a wildlife hotspot and spending many years hunting and fishing means Gottfriedson is no stranger to animals such as bears, deer, wolves and cougars.

It also means he has had to learn ways to keep himself and the animals safe.

This is exactly the type of wildlife education he will be sharing with First Nations communities.

The WildSafeBC program, once known as Bear Aware, has expanded to include a variety of animals that are causing concern in communities.

The one thing most animals have in common is that they are often led to populated areas by human-created attractants.

The message WildSafeBC wants to send is that there are ways in which humans and animals can co-exist peacefully.

Gottfriedson will be working to spread this message and to translate all of WildSafeBC's brochures into the native tongues of area bands.

Program organizers expect there to be concerns unique to these communities and have been looking forward to addressing them.

Alert Bay: A powerhouse of aboriginal culture: The rich heritage set amid pristine wilderness on North Vancouver Island

[Troy Media](#)

August 14, 2013

Sarina White



Alert Bay: A powerhouse of aboriginal culture.

ALERT BAY, B.C, Aug 14, 2013/ Troy Media/ – The pounding of the cedar log drum sets the rhythmic beat for the young dancers as they circle around an open fire. The earthy smell of cedar wood smoke wafts through the Alert Bay Big House where the T'sasala Cultural Group performs

ceremonial dances handed down through the generations.

They're sharing legends about their First Nations culture through traditional native dance.

The young dancers represent the resurgence of an ancient art form that was nearly lost when the Canadian government banned First Nations people from performing

potlatch ceremonies and traditional dance between 1885 and 1951, says 'Namgis elder Vera Newman, who hosts the one-hour performance.

Newman's generation grew up with no understanding or pride in their culture because they were afraid to share their dances and stories. They were also banned from speaking their native tongue.

"Everything was almost lost. My age group didn't know our culture," she tells the audience between dances.

Newman is proud her culture has rebounded and now serves as a focal point of Alert Bay's tourism industry. Once a thriving fishing community, Alert Bay on Cormorant Island off the northeast coast of Vancouver Island, has evolved into a powerhouse of native heritage.

I get a first-hand glimpse of this area's rich heritage and what the area has to offer with my cultural guide, First Nations tour operator Mike Willie. He's the owner of Sea Wolf Adventures, which takes visitors on a 20-minute boat ride from Telegraph Cove to Alert Bay for a three-hour tour of the community's rich native history.

We begin at the 'Namgis Burial Grounds along the foreshore, which is one of the few places in coastal British Columbia where memorial totem poles remain in their original location. Willie explains why the graveyard is closed and must be viewed from the road.

"We are taught never to disturb the dead because we believe they could come and take you," he says.

Willie then takes me to the internationally renowned U'mista Cultural Centre for a performance by the T'sasala Cultural Group at the Big House.

At U'mista, Willie explains the centre was named in honour of the historically significant collection of elaborately carved cedar masks and other regalia, which was seized by police in a 1921 potlatch raid at nearby Village Island.

"The word U'mista means when something special comes back," he says.

Most of the regalia has been returned to the Kwakwaka'wakw People of North Vancouver Island from private collections and museums around the world, while the remainder continues to be sought. Potlatch ceremonies continue to be held today to mark important events, Willie says, including marriage, the naming of children, transferring rights and mourning the dead. The word potlatch means "to give" and invited guests are given gifts for bearing witness to the event..

Among the unique experiences at U'mista Cultural Centre, which includes a museum, an art gallery and gift shop, is the opportunity to participate in an intimate group talk with an elder or native artist. With coffee cups in hand, we gather in a small circle and listen to today's featured native elder, Newman, who shares her sometimes painful stories about her history.

"When the government came here they didn't respect our value system," she says, wiping away the tears streaming down her face. "It was really difficult growing up in that time."

But times have changed for her people. That's exemplified in a short walk from U'mista, the Aboriginal-owned Culture Shock Interactive Gallery where visitors get the chance to join First Nations People in traditional activities, including a salmon barbecue, cedar bark weavings, story telling at the Big House and canoe rides.

Sitting on the waterfront outside Culture Shock, we're taught the First Nations secrets to cooking salmon on large cedar wood "pegs" over an open flame. Culture Shock also includes a waterfront coffee shop and a boutique that sells native artwork, jewelry, woven cedar articles and clothing.

Visitors to North Vancouver Island can also tour the Traditional Territories of the region's First Nations People, which are scattered throughout the Mainland inlets across the Queen Charlotte Strait.

Nakwakto Rapids Tours, based out of Port Hardy, guides tourists on a four-hour return boat ride to the world's fastest navigable tidal currents in the Traditional Territories. The tour is hosted by a cultural guide from the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations.

Our guide, Elisha Taylor-Child, points to a red ochre pictograph of a small child on a rock wall near the rapids, which can churn up to 16 knots and turn the inlet into whirlpools of white water. She explains her ancestors took the clothing of infants to the rock wall for an ancient ceremony.

"The water flows so rapidly through the area it's like wiping the slate clean and ensuring the child has a long and prosperous life," Taylor-Child says.

The region is home to some of the West Coast's most spectacular wildlife and we spot humpback whales blowing "sea smoke" into the air, dozens of Steller sea lions lazing on the rocks, sea otters floating on their backs in the water, playful porpoises and cormorants.

If You Go: U'mista Cultural Centre, Alert Bay. Adults \$11.20, youth 8-18 \$5.60 – <http://www.umista.org/>
T'sasala Cultural Group, Alert Bay. Adults \$15, children \$8. (Thursdays, Fridays and

Saturdays.) – http://www.umista.org/tours/Tasala_Dance_Group.php
Culture Shock Interactive Gallery, Alert Bay. Cultural experiences range from \$60-\$80 for adults and are half-price for kids. – www.cultureshockgallery.ca/
Sea Wolf Adventures, Telegraph Cove. Tours \$125 for adults and \$60 for kids.
Nakwakto Rapids Tours, Port Hardy. \$100 per person. – www.seawolfadventures.ca

Where to stay: Black Bear Resort Hotel, Port McNeill — www.port-mcneill-accommodation.com/
Oceanview Cabins, Alert Bay – <http://www.oceanviewcabins.ca/>

Family violence program keeps aboriginal children at home, out of care: Walking the Path Together links outreach worker with children from troubled homes

[CBC News](#)

Aug 14, 2013 3:28 PM MT

A program on Alberta's reserves which aims to help those hurt by family violence is showing strong results, advocates say.

"It's knowing that we have done something positive out there and we have made a difference in the families we work with," said Darlene Lightning-Mattson, executive director of the Sucker Creek Women's Shelter in northern Alberta.

Walking the Path Together gives one-on-one help to children whose mothers have visited women's shelters on First Nations reserves.

Five shelters participated in the project, which employed an outreach worker to follow up with the children of women who have reported domestic problems to shelter staff.

"Now our workers go into the client's home do one-on-one with mom and she also works with the children and their siblings," Lightning-Mattson said.

The outreach worker, referred to as an "Eagle Feather Worker," then acts as an advocate for the children within their community to ensure all basic needs are met.

This can include food for the children, as well as checking in with local schools to see if the child is having problems there. Special programs aimed at the parents deal with substance abuse and job training, to prevent future crises.

In the program's three years, the results have been dramatic, according to Jan Reimer with the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters.

"Mom is going back to school, one woman even started her own business. We've got children — one was a drug runner and isn't anymore.

"So it's really had remarkable results," Reimer said.

According to the council, the program has been able to help 24 mothers go back to school or find employment in the last three years, and has kept more than 80 kids out of government care.

Demand for the program continues to rise.

"By this time, over three years ...my numbers have increased over 50 percent," Lightning-Mattson said.

The project is paid for jointly by the federal and provincial governments, but is due to run out next spring.

The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters hopes sharing its results will drum up more money to allow the program to carry on.

Letter: Bill S-2 does not protect First Nations interests

[Montreal Gazette](#)

August 15, 2013 9:02 AM

Pamela D. Palmater

Re: "[Bill S-2 intended to protect First Nations interests](#)" (Online Letters, Aug. 7)

Jason MacDonald, Director of Communications for Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Bernard Valcourt, suggests that Bill S-2 "extends to people living on reserve the same basic rights and protections that individuals living off reserve enjoy regarding the family home."

This is not true. Indigenous nations are sovereign nations with their own laws, rules, policies, governments and justice systems. Their legal right to govern themselves is protected in Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 as an inherent right. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as other international laws also protect the right of First Nations to be self-determining.

When INAC claims they are extending the same basic rights to those living on reserve, what I believe they mean is that they are illegally imposing provincial laws on reserve contrary to section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867, Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 and contrary to various treaties and international laws. INAC fails to mention this legislation will require the consent of the provinces and companion legislation to bring it into effect.

On many reserves, homes are occupied by upward of 25 people, including husband, wife, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Certificates of Possession (like fee simple deeds) can be in the name of hundreds of people. Any disposition of what is deemed a family home could have devastating effects on large extended families and especially elders.

Mr. MacDonald suggests that Bill S-2 does not change the fact that only registered Indians can hold a Certificate of Possession on reserve, however non-First Nations people could possess the home for a temporary period of time.

This statement does not expose the real implications. The Indian Act prevents anyone who is NOT an Indian from even temporarily possessing land on a reserve — which includes permanent structures on the land, like a house. Section 20(1) of the Indian Act specifies:

20 (1) No Indian is lawfully in possession of land in a reserve unless, with the approval of the Minister, possession of the land has been allotted to him by the council of the band."

Section 2 of the Indian Act specifies that reserve lands are reserved for the exclusive use and benefit of the band (First Nation) for which they were set aside. Further, many treaties set up reserve lands for the exclusive use and benefit of Indians — not non-Indians.

Bill S-2 purports to change all this and allow non-Indians to gain up to a life interest in lands and homes on reserve.

Mr. MacDonald suggests that Bill S-2 would facilitate emergency protection orders to remove a violent partner from the home. But INAC has offered no statistical, research-based or other evidence to prove that women losing their homes on reserve is a rampant or common occurrence.

According to INAC, the majority of CPs are actually held by women, not men. If this legislation was about protecting First Nation women, they would have built more homes on reserve, funded new shelters, increased funding for preventive services and increased funding for access to legal services for these women.

Mr. MacDonald suggests the government has consulted extensively with First Nations on this issue.

In fact, INAC's own Special Ministerial Representative on Matrimonial Law on Reserve who interviewed First Nations individuals, communities and organizations all over Canada, concluded that none of the information packages or meetings to date amounted to legal consultation as required under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

The Dene Nation of the Northwest Territories endorses the Principles to Guide Health Care Transformation in Canada

[Canada NewsWire](#)

OTTAWA, Aug. 15, 2013

OTTAWA, Aug. 15, 2013 /CNW/ - The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) is pleased to announce that the Dene Nation of the Northwest Territories is supporting the Principles to Guide Health Care Transformation in Canada. The Dene Nation becomes the first Aboriginal group and the 131st organization in total to officially endorse the document.

"In order to make progress and to improve the health of First Nations communities across Canada, strong principles are needed," said Dene Nation National Chief Bill Erasmus. "The Dene Nation and its 30 communities within the NWT strongly support the CMA's belief that a transformation of the health care system is critical to meet the needs of the future," he said.

"As an emergency room physician in Yellowknife, I see every day the urgent health care needs of Aboriginal peoples," said CMA president Dr. Anna Reid. "As our recent report on the social determinants of health makes clear, improving the health of First Nations is a priority for the CMA and it should be a priority for our country."

Released last month, the CMA report *What Makes us Sick?* calls for a comprehensive strategy and associated investments by the federal government to improve the health of Aboriginal peoples, in partnership with non-governmental organizations and Aboriginal communities.

The principles were developed in 2011 by the CMA and the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) to guide the transformation of the health care system in Canada. The goal is for Canada's public health care system to provide quality care and to be sustainable, equitable, accountable and patient-centred, with a greater emphasis on prevention. (Click [here](#) to see the principles.)

"The Dene Nation encourages other First Nations communities to endorse the principles. It is also our role to work closely with the medical profession to address the needs of our people," added National Chief Erasmus.

"We are pleased to count on the Dene Nation's support and their leadership within the Assembly of First Nations to improve the health care system for First Nations and for all Canadians," said Dr. Reid. "We hope that other First Nations will follow suit and also endorse the principles."

The Dene Nation, also known as the Athapaskan peoples, is a political organization located in the Northwest Territories. Its objective is to support the Dene Territories and Dene Communities in upholding the rights and

interests of the Dene, including rights and interests arising from Dene use and occupation of land and interests arising from Treaties.

The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) is the national voice of Canadian physicians. Founded in 1867, the CMA is a voluntary professional organization representing more than 78,000 of Canada's physicians and comprising 12 provincial and territorial medical associations and 51 national medical organizations. CMA's mission is to serve and unite the physicians of Canada and be the national advocate, in partnership with the people of Canada, for the highest standards of health and health care.

SOURCE: Canadian Medical Association

Read more: <http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/1416179#ixzz2c30acRdZ>

Consultation is supposed to be a mutually negotiated and designed process which ensures impacted First Nations communities (in this case, all 615) be fully informed about the legislation and its intended impacts as well as take measures to accommodate their concerns and obtain their consent. This simply did not occur and each version of this bill has been nearly unanimously rejected by First Nations men, women and communities all over Canada.

Mr. MacDonald also says that Canada is further supporting First Nations by creating a national Centre of Excellence to help First Nations implement these laws.

This new Centre was not requested by First Nations. If INAC wanted to support First Nations, they would not have made substantial funding cuts to all the national, regional and provincial First Nation organizations that already assist First Nations with law development and implementation.

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U of M developing program to address First Nation water issues

[Winnipeg Free Press](#)

August 14, 2013

The University of Manitoba will develop an innovative training program to improve First Nations water and sanitation through federal funding announced this week.

U of M will get a share of \$24 million over six years in 15 initiatives through the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada's (NSERC) Collaborative Research and Training Experience (CREATE) Program to help science and engineering graduates add to their academic achievements the valuable job skills necessary in today's labour market.

Funded networks will be led by teams of Canadian university researchers who will help students develop leadership, entrepreneurship, communication and project management skills, said the federal government.

U of M received \$1.65 million through CREATE for The H2O CREATE initiative for water and sanitation security --- designed to address research science and training gaps that are preventing effective, culturally appropriate investments in water and sanitation security on First Nations reserves.

Labrador aboriginal group signs co-operation agreement on ore project

[Global Post](#)

August 15, 2013 11:15

HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY, N.L. - The NunatuKavut Community Council says it has signed a co-operation agreement with Tata Steel Minerals Canada Ltd. for the company's direct shipping ore project in western Labrador.

The aboriginal organization says it's been in negotiations with the company for months and the agreement will provide socio-economic benefits to the community.

In a statement the council says the agreement covers environmental protection, employment and business opportunities including financial benefits.

No financial details were released.

The council says the company has agreed to ensure contractors hired to work on the project comply with the agreement.

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First Nations chiefs worried about west-east pipeline terminal: Express 'serious concerns' about possible environmental impact of marine terminal in Saint John

[CBC News](#)

Aug 15, 2013 12:01 PM AT



The proposed Canaport Energy East Marine Terminal would connect TransCanada's Energy East Pipeline to an ice-free, deep water port. (CBC)

The Assembly of First Nation Chiefs in New Brunswick is speaking out against plans to build a deep water marine terminal in Saint John for the proposed west-east oil pipeline.

TransCanada Corp. and Irving Oil Ltd. have formed a joint venture to build and operate a new \$300-million terminal at Canaport if the EnergyEast pipeline project proceeds.

The chiefs "have serious concerns over negative environmental impacts" the terminal could have on the aboriginal fishery in the Bay of Fundy, including endangered salmon, according to a statement issued on Thursday.

They are also worried about the possible impact on their ability to exercise constitutionally protected aboriginal and treaty rights to generate a "moderate livelihood" from fishing, it states.

"But this isn't just a First Nations issue, nor is it limited to just the salmon," said Chief George Ginnish, the assembly's Mi'kmaq co-chair.

"There are a lot of people in non-aboriginal fishing villages along the Fundy coast who could suffer if the protection of the environment is not at the forefront of this Canaport expansion," he said.

Premier promised consultations

Chief Joanna Bernard, the assembly's Maliseet-Wolastoqiyik co-chair, said Premier David Alward vowed during the EnergyEast pipeline announcement to work with First Nations to ensure environmental and safety standards are followed.

"The expansion of the Canaport Marine terminal which is expected to be completed by 2018 will require First Nations consultation, and we take the premier at his word that he will deliver on his promise," she said.

TransCanada Corp. officials have also [promised to engage with First Nations](#) and other communities as its \$12-billion west-east pipeline project moves through the regulatory approval process.

Chief executive officer Russ Girling has said talks with First Nations communities are "absolutely critical."

The pipeline proposal, which still needs regulatory approval, would send 1.1 million barrels of oil per day from Western Canada to refineries and export terminals in Eastern Canada.

TransCanada is proposing to convert roughly 3,000 kilometres of natural gas pipeline on its existing Canadian Mainline route so it can carry crude oil.

The company would also construct 1,400 kilometres of new pipeline to carry crude oil into Saint John, where it will end at the Canaport LNG terminal.

The Irving Oil Ltd. refinery in Saint John is the largest in Canada and can process 300,000 barrels of oil per day. Saint John also has a deep-water port and a liquefied natural gas facility.

TransCanada is expected to file its regulatory application with the National Energy Board by the end of the year.

The proposed Canaport Energy East Marine Terminal would connect TransCanada's Energy East Pipeline to an ice-free, deep water port.

Design work on the terminal, which would be located next to Irving Oil's existing import terminal, is expected to begin in 2015.

Church apologizes to Kenora residential school survivors:
Cecilia Jeffrey school students were subjected to ear,
nutritional experiments

[CBC News](#)

15 August 2013 15:30

The Presbyterian Church issued a specific apology on Wednesday to former students of a residential school in Kenora, Ont., where medical and nutritional experiments had taken place.

Former students of the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School attended a commemorative gathering on Wednesday at a memorial where the church-run, government-funded facility once stood.

Recently released documents reveal that aboriginal children who were sent to Cecilia Jeffrey were subjected to experimental treatments for ear infections, as well as nutritional and dental experiments that were recently highlighted by a food historian.

For some survivors, the latest revelations have compounded the pain they have long felt as a result of the residential school experience.

"We had thought that we'd somewhat come to peace with some issues, then there's ongoing revelations of other events happening," said Richard Green, a former student who organized Wednesday's commemorative event.

Former students at the ceremony shed tears as they received an apology from the Presbyterian Church. It did not conduct the experiments, but it operated the Cecilia Jeffrey school for a number of years.

"I want to acknowledge that at Cecilia Jeffrey, there was physical abuse and sexual abuse and emotional abuse. For that, I am profoundly and deeply sorry," said Peter Bush of the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

"We sinned, and I am sorry for that."

Bush said the church wants to reassert its apology to residential school survivors and reaffirm its commitment to reconciliation and healing.

Experiments date back to 1940s

In the 1940s and '50s, research on the effectiveness of vitamin supplements was carried out — with the federal government's knowledge — on malnourished aboriginal people, including children at Cecilia Jeffrey and five other residential schools across Canada.

According to the research by Canadian food historian Ian Mosby, subjects were kept on starvation-level diets and given or denied vitamins, minerals and certain foods.

Some dental services were also withheld because researchers thought healthier teeth and gums might skew the results, Mosby found.

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt confirmed that nutritional experiments did take place in residential schools, calling them "abhorrent examples of the dark pages of the residential schools legacy."

Last week, a 1954 report obtained by CBC News found that a doctor and a school nurse experimented with 14 different drugs to treat "ear troubles" in children at the Kenora residential school.

The report from the Indian and Northern Health Services archive said some of the children who were treated became deaf.

According to the report, children were taught to irrigate their own ears, or the ears of younger children, with hot water.

A doctor visited the school on a weekly basis to look out for ear infections "and the recommended medicine was used when possible," the report stated.

No federal official in attendance

An official with the federal Aboriginal Affairs Department was invited to speak at the ceremony in Kenora, but no one from the government attended.

"It's very disappointing," Green said. "As far as yesterday, we received a call that somebody from Aboriginal Affairs will be in attendance."

The federal government has maintained that its apology in 2008 covers the residential school experience as a whole.

But Basil Green, another former student at Cecilia Jeffrey, said he was disappointed that the federal government did not provide a specific apology.

"They are answerable to the communities, they should've been here," he said.

Others, like Richard Green, say they want information on everything that was done to them while they were in the government's care.

"I think it's a moral, it's a legal obligation," he said.

The federal government has said it has released documents related to the experiments to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the body tasked with documenting the residential schools experience.

Aboriginal round dance has a place for everyone

[Brandon Sun](#)

Aug. 15, 2013 at 8:19 AM

Alexandra Paul

CARE to dance?

Winnipeg is vying to be the Prairie city with the biggest round dance Thursday in the lead-up to the annual aboriginal Manito Ahbee Festival.

Manito Ahbee is the province's glitziest showcase for aboriginal music and culture. It takes place Aug. 16 to 21.

An intertribal call to dance means everyone, aboriginal and non-aboriginal, is invited into the circle. It is one of five events designed to draw in public participation to this year's Manito Ahbee events.

The other public invitations to dance include the grand entries at noon and 7 p.m. for the competition powwows at the MTS Centre on Tuesday and Wednesday.

"The whole point of the festival is to share it with everybody. Manito Ahbee is a festival that showcases aboriginal culture but it's not a festival for just aboriginal people," publicist Nancy Gregory said.

The ninth annual festival is shifting to a new seasonal time slot this year, moving to a summer schedule from the fall to coincide with the North American powwow trail.

The powwow trail is a fixture on Canadian First Nations and American reservations from the Atlantic to the Pacific every year.

The festival's centrepieces are the same -- the red carpet Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards Sunday and a competition powwow Tuesday and Wednesday. The powwow is expected to draw hundreds of aboriginal dancers from Manitoba and beyond. Cash prizes for dancers are worth a total of \$125,000 this year.

Both the awards night and the two-day powwow, with an aboriginal marketplace of artists and artisan work for sale, are staged at the MTS Centre. Family day passes are \$45. Singles are \$16.

The festival will skip Monday to make room for American teen heartthrob singer Selena Gomez at the MTS Centre.

There are a number of other firsts this year, intended to broaden the scope of the annual event.

Those firsts include the Oh My Gospel (OMG) Jamboree at the Holy Trinity Church across from the Millennium Library on Saturday. That event includes iconic aboriginal performer Ray St. Germain, who is to be awarded a lifetime aboriginal achievement award the next night at the main awards.

A M©tis jigging contest was also added to the festival lineup for the first time this year.

For the ninth year in a row, aboriginal actor and director Lorne Cardinal will host the festival and the awards night.

The theme this year is "ignite your spirit" and the kickoff is on Friday with a press conference at 11 a.m. Gregory said there are plans to light a sacred fire at The Fork's Oodena Circle Friday and hold a pipe ceremony to open the festival.

But the festival this year really begins Thursday with the gigantic round dance on Edmonton Street.

The streets will be closed from Graham Avenue to Portage Avenue late Thursday morning to accommodate the arrival of traditional dancers, drums and the public starting at 11:45 a.m.

Two teenage boys missing from Wetaskiwin believed headed to Edmonton



Tharren Cabry, 14, is one of two teens reported missing in Wetaskiwin after not returning home on August 14. Cory Blain Andrews, 15, is the second teen. Police say they may be together and could be travelling to Edmonton. Photograph by: Supplied, Wetaskiwin RCMP

EDMONTON - Wetaskiwin RCMP are asking the public's assistance in finding two teenage boys who are missing from that city and may be headed to Edmonton.

Cory Blain Andrews, 15, and 14-year-old Tharren Cabry were reported missing Wednesday when they did not return home. They may be together and could be travelling to Edmonton, police said in a news release Thursday.

Andrews is aboriginal, five-foot-seven, weighing 160 pounds. He has short, dark hair and brown eyes, fair skin and was last seen wearing a black hoodie sweater, jeans, black Sugi shoes and a black Adidas hat.

Cabry is described as aboriginal, five-foot-five, weighing 140 pounds. He has short, dark hair and brown eyes, a slim build and may be wearing glasses. Cabry was last seen wearing a blue T-shirt, black jeans, a Miami Hurricanes ball cap and black high-top shoes. His family is particularly concerned as he has special needs and requires medication.

Anyone with information regarding their whereabouts is asked to call Wetaskiwin RCMP at 780-312-7200, any other police or RCMP detachment or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477), www.crimestoppers.ab.ca

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Value of federal flood aid to First Nations questioned

[CBC News](#)

Aug 15, 2013 11:32 AM CT



Flooding in 2011 forced many First Nations people off their reserves in Manitoba. (CBC)

The federal government provided more than \$84 million to Manitoba First Nations communities flooded out in 2011 but admits it doesn't know how effective the emergency aid was.

An Emergency Management Assistance Program (EMAP) report released this week by Aboriginal and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) finds the program helped with immediate safety issues but the government says it can't assess the effectiveness of long-term safety issues and permanent flood protection.

The review also finds that its emergency assistance program was "ineffective" and it highlights the government's limited ability to address long-term and systemic issues faced by First Nations during natural disasters.



The federal government's emergency assistance program for flooded-out First Nations communities in

Manitoba was "ineffective", according to a report that also highlights the government's limited ability to address long-term and systemic issues faced by First Nations during natural disasters. (CBC)

"It became clear that the emergency management system was being stretched to the limit of its capacity and EMAP was not able to muster the required additional 'surge' capacity to deal with the situation in an effective way," the report says.

Organizations involved in the emergency response, including Manitoba's emergency measures office, the Manitoba Association of Native Fire Fighters (MANFF) and the affected First Nations communities "lacked trust and cooperation with one another," the report adds.

That was due to "unclear governance and processes" that the AANDC Manitoba regional office was responsible for, which caused confusion at all levels, states the report.

The regional office is cited in numerous findings, described as an "overwhelmed" system that depended on one person, the emergency management coordinator.

Funding Structure 'inefficient'

The report reveals First Nations communities that needed emergency assistance were paid in advance by AANDC to respond to the flood.

The communities would then submit claims to the Manitoba government for reimbursement. The province would pay and then recover the costs through their disaster financial assistance agreements with the federal public safety department — a process that can take up to six years.

Ideally, the claims would be equal to the advance but problems arose when the claims were deemed "ineligible" by the province.

This resulted in a repayment process that could take years for the First Nation to pay back the province.

The report proposes that the province "exhaust all reasonable and practical means" through the courts to recover the money and only then will they consider sharing the costs of the losses.

No human cost calculated in report

Manitoba MLA Jon Gerrard says the report is an acknowledgement the federal government's effort came up short in 2011 and that there needs to be major changes.

He says that the federal government doesn't factor in the human cost of the disaster.

"What strikes me as really clear is that today we have almost 2000 people out of communities," he told CBC News.

"And there is nowhere here that adequately addresses that there needed to be a major effort to get people back home."

Recommendations in the report include:

- A need to develop better linkages with other programs within AANDC to ensure an effective system for supporting long-term solutions.
- The development of guidelines for First Nations emergency management plans that show how the First Nations can access assistance and plans should be updated and held at the regional office.
- Clear procedures need to be developed to support emergency responses.
- All partners should be engaged to create an effective emergency management system.

Aboriginal and Northern Development Canada declined to comment further on the report.

Inuit Artifacts Can't Come Home to Nunavut

[Indian Country Today](#)

August 14, 2013

The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in the Northwest Territories of Canada has been housing 150,000 Inuit artifacts from Nunavut for the last 10 years, reports [CBC News](#).

This isn't because the centre wants to hold them. In 1999, when Nunavut was founded, an agreement was reached that the Northwest Territories and Nunavut would split the collection.

The problem is that Nunavut still lacks a climate controlled facility to store the priceless artifacts.

Barb Cameron, Prince of Wales director, told CBC News that the centre is eager to hand the items over once a center is built.

The Nunavut Department of Culture and Heritage says it wants to build a heritage facility, but is not sure when that can happen.

Idle No More: They're back: New protest staged at Memorial Park

[Winnipeg Free Press](#)

15 August 2013 15:28

Adam Wazny

After seven months of silence and working behind the scenes, the Idle No More movement returned to the public domain Wednesday evening.

More than 150 people took part in a drum circle and dance at Memorial Park in Winnipeg, marking the first public Idle No More protest since January. The small demonstration coincided with similar protests in Saskatoon, Regina and Ottawa in an effort to resume its message of unity and empowerment to the aboriginal community.

"We needed a break to re-assess where we were headed," said Crystal Greene, one of the organizers in the local chapter of Idle No More. "But we were still very active, talking about the issues."

Wednesday's gathering opened with Winnipeg Water Wednesdays -- a weekly fresh-water awareness group started up by Idle No More in conjunction with the University of Winnipeg Aboriginal Student Council -- trying to bring awareness about the contested Energy East oil pipeline. The proposal would see an existing national pipeline upgraded to feed up to 850,000 barrels of crude oil a day from Alberta to New Brunswick.

The water-protection group is exactly the type of behind-the-scenes work Idle No More has been working on during the movement's hiatus. Officials say there's been dialogue with the national NDP and with the Council of Canadians, too, all happening in the shadows of rail blockades, hunger strikes and other higher-profile protest actions earlier this year.

"The work was being done on a more personal level," said organizer Michael Kannon. "Blockades and everything like that is kind of at the macro level; what really affects change is conversations."

"Really, our biggest concern, what's been our concern since Idle No More started, is what is our relationship with each other? What is our relationship with the levels of government? All of these other side issues, they are great and important, but the core issue is our relations with everyone."

Kannon didn't mince words when asked to give the temperature of those political relationships.

"Stressed, strained. Places like (Manitoba), it's warming. Nationally, it's cooling."

While the pipeline served as the reason to get into gear once again, it's now not the only area of concern for the local chapter. Kannon said the recent disagreement between First Nations people and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights regarding the term "genocide" and residential schools has quietly sparked the aboriginal community.

"More people have started to contact us because of that," Kannon said. "Our planning meetings have quadrupled. The (genocide) issue became important to everyone. Hopefully we can carry that forward."

New funding

tbnewswatch.com

August 14, 2013

Jamie Smith



Greg Rickford announced \$4.4 million from FedNor Wednesday morning.

The federal government is looking for growth when it comes to First Nations business in the Ring of Fire.

Greg Rickford, the federal minister responsible for FedNor and the Ring of Fire, on Wednesday announced \$4.4 million over three years to the Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund. The fund will use the money to help First Nations' businesses with everything from marketing to business plans.

"We want to put businesses in position where they can create jobs for local people so that we take up the lion's share (of the Ring of Fire job creation)," Rickford said. "This is not giving money away. This is creating opportunities where results can be measurable over the course of time."

While the funding isn't contingent on results, NADF executive director Brian Davies said over the next three years the organization does have a lot of targets it would like to meet. Workshops, training seminars and conferences that will be made possible through the funding would like to draw at least 1,000 youth from Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities. Davies said he'd like to see at least 500 business plans generated over the next three years as well.

"When we get involved we get involved for a purpose," Davies said.

The funding will also help new businesses network to create partnerships and hear from other business leaders how they became successful. Bringing that type of expertise to remote communities can be a challenge.

"We can now be in a position to offer some of that advice," Davies said.

Stem cell donors needed

[Kenora Online](#)

15 August 2013

Brenden Harris



Kenora residents will have a chance to become registered stem cell donors, during a swab clinic this week. The first day of the clinic will be Friday at the Ne Chee Friendship Centre between ten and three, and a second event will be taking place in conjunction with the Whitefish Bay pow wow. Tania Cameron organized the event, after hearing about a lack of stem cell donors among the Aboriginal Community.

"There are currently 15 Aboriginal people across Canada that need a stem cell donor match. Unfortunately less than one per cent of Aboriginal people register to donate," she said.

She says she's contacted the organization that takes the swab tests, and she notes it's a relatively quick process.

"There's more time spent actually just registering because there's paperwork and they need to know a little bit of your health history and what not. That takes about ten minutes and the actually swabbing only takes a minute or two. What they do is they take four long Q-tips and they'll swab four areas of your mouth and then you're done," she said.

While they're hoping for a wide variety of people to come out and get tested, Cameron notes there's one group of individuals that are needed.

"There's an interest in Aboriginal males ages 18 to 35. We're not going to turn

anyone away but the One Match people did says there's a strong chance of having a match from that particular group," he said.

She says she's not aware of any similar stem cell swab events that have taken place in Kenora, but is hoping to see more in the region after this weeks event.

Ask the Religion Experts: How can Canada right the wrongs done to First Nation peoples?

[Ottawa Citizen](#)

August 15, 2013 2:07 PM

JACK MCLEAN is a Baha'i scholar, teacher, essayist and poet published in the fields of spirituality, Baha'i theology and poetry.

The Prime Minister's long overdue formal apology on behalf of the Canadian government on June 11, 2008 was surely a step in the right direction. But systematic, effective, long-range solutions are required. Righting the wrongs could possibly include the following:

(1) Consultation rather than conflict holds the key to breaking the deadlock. Patient, harmonious and cordial consultation between First Nations leaders and the federal government should begin in earnest.

This type of consultation will lead to genuine results rather than the disappointing showcased, hastily arranged conferences that satisfy momentary media hunger. The "them against us" political power struggle mentality and angry rhetoric have proven to be defective and self-defeating.

(2) Aboriginals must have their fair share of natural resources found on their lands or in their waters. This equitable sharing will allow some reserves and communities to benefit from a resource based economy.

(3) First Nations students should receive the necessary training and education in the trades and professions that will allow them to manage their own affairs and to meet ongoing infrastructure needs.

(4) Canadian history textbooks should be rewritten to make all students aware of the sorry treatment that was meted out to First Nations peoples, particularly by the cultural assimilation policy that motivated the Indian Act and the Residential Schools system. Curricula should sensitize students to native spirituality.

(5) The Indian Act of 1876, which has been reformed by numerous and generally progressive amendments since its enactment, was based on a policy of assimilation and control. It should be abolished and replaced by a bill of constitutionally

protected rights and freedoms that incorporate its amendments. A new framework needs to be adopted.

(6) Pouring massive amounts of federal money into the band councils has not produced the expected results. Although federal funding should continue, taxpayers have the right to know that their money is being spent wisely and honestly.

Close supervision of the spending of any federal money is appropriate, but economic self-sufficiency, not welfare, should remain the goal.

Rev. KEVIN FLYNN is an Anglican priest and director of the Anglican studies program at Saint Paul University.

We cannot right wrongs without knowing and naming those wrongs as fully as possible.

Between roughly 1820 and 1969, Anglicans administered some two dozen residential schools for aboriginal people. Canadian governments saw the schools as a means of controlling and ultimately assimilating aboriginal people.

Since the late 1980s, many residential school survivors have told of their experience of the impact of their loss of language and culture, as well as instances of physical and sexual abuse.

On Aug. 6, 1993, Archbishop Michael Peers, then Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, issued an apology for the Church's participation in the system. He said in part, "I am sorry that we were part of a system which took you and your children from home and family. I am sorry, more than I can say, that we tried to remake you in our image, taking from you your language and the signs of your identity. I know how often you have heard words which have been empty because they have not been accompanied by actions. I pledge to you my best efforts, and the efforts of our church at the national level, to walk with you along the path of God's healing."

The Anglican Church set up an Indigenous Healing Fund to support local work toward healing. Churches and the federal government reached a settlement in which the churches would provide satisfactory compensation to survivors. The settlement led to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and research centre.

Aboriginal Anglicans today are an important and vigorous part of the Church's life. We have a national aboriginal bishop, as well as diocesan bishops of First Nations or Inuit ancestry.

This is but one part of the Canadian story, but it is one that shows that truth and reconciliation are costly but possible.

Rev. RAY INNEN PARCHELO is a novice Tendai priest and founder of Red Maple Sangha, the first lay Buddhist community in Eastern Ontario.

Pope John Paul II said: "A society will be judged on the basis of how it treats its weakest members." Even today we see revelations about nutritional experiments on aboriginal children while the efforts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are impeded by lack of access to official documents.

It will be hard to determine an appropriate response, let alone suggest corrective action, when we have not even understood the extent of historical wrong; reconciliation needs to be preceded by truth.

What we have is racial discrimination and violations of rights by successive governments and trusted institutions on a massive scale. Our responses will reflect differences in processes. Truth and reconciliation is only a moral realignment which does not require "righting wrongs" in the judicial sense. Therefore, concepts of remedy, in legal terms, or compensation in financial terms must be included, parallel to this shattered trust.

When addressing events that span such long time and involve so many, we would be naive to expect that the causes or environments that produced those wrongs have disappeared. Justice will take many forms and must penetrate deep into our official structures and attitudes.

Within institutions, but also in our own attitudes, we are well-advised to examine how we may be setting the stage for future wrongs. At the government level we must begin by demanding a commitment to real self-determination for aboriginal peoples, ending the patronizing attitudes and structures that fostered past wrongs. This takes us beyond mere bureaucratic management into serious nation building and this is where we need to be going.

At the personal and private level, we need to be examining our own views of aboriginal peoples to see how our belief of what constitutes a Canadian and our vision for Canada may still be blind to the situation of First Nations peoples.

Rabbi REUVEN BULKA, head of Congregation Machzekei Hadas in Ottawa, hosts Sunday Night with Rabbi Bulka on 580 CFRA.

Canada cannot right the wrongs. The only way to right the wrongs is to go back and undo the past. That is impossible.

Many of the victims are long gone, forever removed from any apology, never mind righting a wrong. And the repercussions of the abuse are still with the First Nation peoples.

The rates of poverty and unemployment are intolerable, as are the rates of crime and addiction. To set things right is beyond herculean.

But this does not mean we should do nothing. It means that we need to sharpen the focus on what is a realistic yet optimal approach. It is done with the realization that with all the goodwill and maximum effort, we will never right the wrongs. But we can hopefully secure for the First Nations a future that holds great promise.

A promising future starts with education. Assuring that every First Nation child has access to education, free education going as far up the education ladder as is possible, would seem to be a good first step.

As to those for whom education at this stage is not realistic, job training, combined with the guarantee of a good job, might be the best alternative.

Encouraging and enabling investment in the resources of the First Nations and giving them the dignity of putting their own resources to good use would also be of immense value.

There is a limit to what government can do, and there are matters pertaining to your question that go beyond government. They have to do with us.

We all can do more to integrate the First Nations into the nation's fabric, on a personal and local level. Representative events should integrate First Nations, and not as a mere tokenism. Going out of our way to befriend someone from the First Nations is also vital.

We may not be able to right the wrongs, but we all can certainly do what is right.

Rev. GEOFF KERSLAKE is a priest of the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Ottawa.

There are ongoing efforts to help the Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples of Canada through government programs aimed, for example, at increasing access to education and at improving living conditions in communities that have had varying levels of success. In addition, numerous agencies, churches, and other groups have projects supporting local populations and providing more personal attention in smaller projects.

To continue to move forward we need to encourage genuine dialogue that hears and respects everyone's experiences and that fosters cooperation in finding solutions to the current problems. In the 1995 brief to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Canadian Catholic Bishops' Conference presented to the Commission that despite struggles: "the Church has walked with Aboriginal Peoples, shared their joys, their sufferings, and their aspirations, and supported their struggles for recognition of their rights for personal and collective growth. Then and

now, the Churches provide a place where Native and non-Native Peoples may find common ground. Non-Native Church members have accompanied Native Peoples on their journey — sometimes leading, sometimes following, sometimes side-by-side."

As a society, we cannot today undo the wrongs done in the past and while we must acknowledge the wrongs done we also need to remember the positive developments both in the past and the present. It is difficult to have a single solution to the complex problems facing indigenous peoples but an indispensable component is respectful dialogue and cooperation between all the parties involved. Improvements cannot be made without everyone's input and engagement.

ABDUL RASHID is a member of the Ottawa Muslim community, the Christian-Muslim Dialogue and the Capital Region Interfaith Council.

There seems to be a general acceptance of the wrongs done to First Nation peoples among Canadians. The impact of these wrongs is many dimensional, which are both evident and well-documented.

For example, one of the major problems from which the First Nation peoples suffer is widespread and persistent poverty. This and other problems which they have continued to endure over a very long time will not be resolved by a simple acknowledgment.

More important, these problems will persist as long as we consider them "their", the First Nation peoples' problem and not "Canadian".

This acceptance of the responsibility must encompass the people of Canada including, of course, the First National peoples, the political parties in the country and the various levels of government. The subject should be discussed among different population groups and it should form permanent part of the platforms of different political parties.

People should demand from their elected representatives to discuss this issue in a non-partisan way in the provincial legislatures and the federal parliament. The resolutions adopted should allocate, in addition to other practical measures, a specified annual percentage (one or two per cent) of national income. Annual progress reports should be published.

It should be recognized that the wrongs were done a long time ago and the consequent problems have been festering during the subsequent years. Therefore, the solution will not occur overnight, but will take honest and persistent efforts for the foreseeable future.

Rev. JOHN COUNSELL is discipleship pastor at Bethel Pentecostal Church in Ottawa. He is also host of Late Night Counsell weeknights on AM580/CFRA Ottawa.

My opinions concerning First Nation Peoples (FNP) are profoundly affected by my eight years pastoring in Western Manitoba.

At any given time, my Sunday morning crowd of 400 was comprised of at least 80 to 100 FNPs. Our connection to the reserves in the area was strong. Our congregation's FNPs were such a delight. However, when we'd have our inevitable discussions regarding solutions to political issues, their statements shocked me.

The toughest lines of thinking I've ever heard expressed came from my native friends in Manitoba. What was shocking was that they were not the typical politically correct solutions that we constantly hear bandied about here in Ottawa.

Their vitriol was two-fold. First and foremost, against their tribes, who they saw as taking advantage of white guilt and refusing to accept any responsibility for their sad social state. Secondly they were cynical, having zero confidence with white-led governments who never took the time to really understand them. They would tell me in their own words; "throwing truckloads of money at us makes for good headlines, but it never gets to the root of our struggles."

These are not typical FNP opinions. These are the opinions of FNP who would identify themselves chiefly as Bible-believing Christians. In other words, they considered themselves "followers of Christ," even more than FNPs.

Unanimously they confessed their convictions concerning the need for personal responsibility were the result of the spiritual transformation that took place when they embraced a life of truly following Christ. Not just being a "Christian," but passionately patterning their life after Him. If I had a dollar for every FNP that said to me "the only hope for natives in Canada is Christ," you and I could enjoy a wonderful night on the town together.

BALPREET SINGH is legal counsel and acting executive director for the World Sikh Organization of Canada.

I don't think there is any way to completely right the wrongs that have been done; however, the first step must be recognizing the wrongs that were committed and their ongoing legacy and effects today.

For far too long, Canadians have been unaware of and indifferent to the story of Canada's First Nations peoples. Canada's First Nations communities saw their lands seized, their culture undermined and their identity suppressed.

The legacy of these historical abuses continues to linger with Aboriginal communities having lower life expectancy, inadequate housing and infrastructure, and far higher rates of addiction, violence and incarceration.

One of the most shocking abuses against Canada's First Nations was the Indian Residential School system. These federally funded schools stole children away from their families in order to assimilate them into the dominant culture or to "kill the Indian in the child."

It is absolutely essential that Canadians learn about and acknowledge the tragic history and treatment of First Nations in Canada. An important part of that process is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that is currently ongoing. Survivors are being given the opportunity to tell their stories.

Canada's Sikh community has a particular affinity and understanding of what the First Nations have gone through, having experienced severe human rights abuses in Punjab in the '80s and '90s. Like the First Nations, these abuses have still not been acknowledged nor those responsible brought to justice.

As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission holds its national event in British Columbia in September, the Sikh community and my organization will be actively participating, including the creation of a series of short videos talking about the abuse suffered by First Nations communities and how we relate as Canadian Sikhs.

It is only by learning about these tragic chapters in our history that we can ensure such incidents are never repeated in the future.

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